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THE LAST THINGS

BY JOSEPH AGAR BEET, D.D.

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The British Weekly.

LONDON: HODDER & STOUGHTON, 27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

THE LAST THINGS

BY

JOSEPH AGAR BEET D.D.

REVISED THROUGHOUT AND IN PART RE-WRITTEN

FIFTH EDITION

LONDON
HODDER AND STOUGHTON
27 PATERNOSTER ROW

1905

"Be of good cheer about death, and know as true this one thing : that to a good man, whether living or dead, no evil can happen ; and that he and his are not overlooked by the gods. Neither has this that has happened to me come by chance. But this is clear to me, that to die now and to be released was better for me."—SOCRATES BEFORE HIS JUDGES.

"Christ Jesus, who has brought to nought death and brought to light life and incorruptibility by means of the Gospel."—THE APOSTLE PAUL.

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P R E F A C E

THIS volume is a reprint, carefully revised and in part re-written, of a work published in October, 1897, and withdrawn after three editions were exhausted. It discusses two chief topics ; viz. the Second Coming of Christ, and the Doom of the Wicked. Of these, the latter has aroused the greater interest ; and has evoked no little controversy.

During the last century English opinion about the fate of the lost has altogether changed. Very few can now read Wesley's sermons on "Hell" and on "Eternity," nos. 73 and 54, without repudiating much of their teaching with indignation. But when first published and for long years afterwards, they provoked no serious protest. Indeed some of Spurgeon's sermons on the same subject, published less than fifty years ago, would not be tolerated now.

This change of opinion has, in some churches,

been carefully ignored. Devout men justly cling to doctrines which have been to them a power of God for salvation: and it is easy to extend this tenacity to the whole body of the traditional teaching of the Church. Its felt and proved value as a whole has prompted a jealous maintenance of the same in all details; and has aroused opposition to any modification. The consequence has been that, rather than disturb this popular belief and encounter the opposition and suspicion which such disturbance would evoke, many scholarly and godly men, unable to accept in all points the traditional teaching, have preferred to nurse their doubts in silence, some under a sense of guilt for concealing their opinions, until the need for concealment has become to them a humiliating and intolerable bondage. This doubt and fear are very widespread. There has been a retreat from the position held by our fathers, along the whole line; for the more part in darkness and solitude. Of all this I have abundant and pathetic proof.

This concealment has hidden the extent and direction of the retreat. Some, with more or less confidence, have cherished a hope of the ultimate salvation of all men; others, with

greater confidence, have asserted the ultimate extinction of the lost. Not a few have accepted the position marked out in this volume: see Notes N and O; and, for Wesleyan opinion, Notes P and Q. Nearly all others whom I have met in recent years either have no definite convictions, or are unwilling to state them, or hold opinions further removed than mine from the once-prevalent belief of the endless torment of the lost.

A very significant indication of this change is found in the revised Wesleyan catechisms. In No. I. we formerly read, in answer to three questions, that (1) "hell is a dark and bottomless pit, full of fire and brimstone . . . (2) the wicked will be punished in hell by having their bodies tormented by fire, and their souls by a sense of the wrath of God . . . (3) the torments of hell will last for ever and ever." In the revised catechism the only mention of the punishment of the wicked is that "they will go away into everlasting punishment . . . in hell." In No. II. we formerly read, "the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal; *the misery of the wicked, and the happiness of the righteous, being equally endless.*" The words

which I have put in italics are erased from the revised catechism; and no others are put in their place. In other words, the catechisms now merely quote the words of the New Testament, without attempting to expound them. What these words actually mean I have, on p. 188f., endeavoured to show. This change, in books designed for instruction of teachers and scholars, is all-important.

It is also worthy of note that, when this volume first appeared, it received from both Wesleyan newspapers, *The Methodist Recorder* (Oct. 28, 1897) and *The Methodist Times* (Nov. 11), enthusiastic and unqualified commendation. Mr. H. Price Hughes' biographer (on p. 604f.) says that "with Dr. Beet's peculiar theories concerning the hereafter he undoubtedly did not agree"; but she does not say what these theories are, or in what respects Mr. Hughes did not agree with them. Any one who reads pp. 244-249 of this volume will see that I have no such "peculiar theories"; but merely protest against the theories of others as not taught in the Bible, especially against the once-prevalent belief in the endless permanence of all human souls and the endless suffering of the lost. Moreover the review of my *Last*

Things in *The Methodist Times* is complete proof that the writer held views substantially the same as my own.

Another indication of the change is seen in the fact that the Theological Institution Committee, which contains nearly all the most mature scholarship of our Church, when its attention was called to the teaching of this book, soon after it appeared, after careful and prolonged examination refused, by a vote of thirty-one to five with two neutral, to take any action in the matter. So did shortly afterwards, by a unanimous vote, the Second London Synod, of which I am a member. This is decisive proof that, in the opinion of the Committee and the Synod, the views embodied in this work do not go beyond the liberty which the Wesleyan Church may fairly allow to its ministers.

This volume is an attempt to shed light on this retreat, and to indicate a safe path to a secure refuge. It contains no new positive teaching. Whatever I have said about the doom of the lost has been said, almost without contradiction, in all ages and churches. Moreover, in great part, I have confirmed this traditional teaching by bringing abundant and

decisive proof that Christ and His apostles taught clearly and frequently that God will give eternal life to all who put faith in Him and obey His commands ; and sufficient proof that He taught that ruin, utter and final, awaits all who disobey Him. On the other hand I have tried to prove that, by asserting the endless permanence of all human souls and the endless suffering of the lost, the tradition of the Church has gone beyond the assured teaching of the Bible.

The only reply to my arguments has been a resolute and persistent effort to suppress my book, and a successful effort to remove me from my chair at Richmond. To the latter I make no objection. In every public institution the opinions of its supporters must rule. But I most earnestly protest against the attempt to destroy a book which has been, to many devout men and women, a welcome guide amid terrible perplexity. It is simply an attempt to prevent inquirers from learning my reasons for views which every one knows that I hold. In other words, men who have done nothing to fill up the terrible void caused by the discredit which has fallen on the traditional belief have done their utmost to prevent me from

trying to repair this breach in the round of Christian Theology. Their action, however well-meant, is an attempt to suppress intelligent thought about the things of God; an attempt worthy only of the Dark Ages. As a Protestant, I claim a right of appeal from the traditional teaching of the Church to the supreme authority of the Bible.

Unjust and unworthy as they admitted this attempt to be, many friends holding my views—some of them as earnestly as I do, including the late revered Hugh Price Hughes—urged me strongly, in view of the circumstances of the Wesleyan Church, to bend to what they believed to be a passing storm, by consenting to a withdrawal which they assured me would be only temporary. To this almost universal pressure, from friends whose advice I could not lightly set aside, too readily I yielded.

Four years later, in 1902 at Manchester, by designating me for another term at Richmond, the Conference formally admitted that my well-known opinions do not, so long as they are not republished, unfit me for the position of a teacher of Systematic Theology in a Wesleyan college. This admission, by the highest authority in our Church, is of utmost importance.

This vote encouraged me to ask, in 1904, from the Conference, in terms of a promise given at Manchester not to republish my book without its consent, permission to republish it. But the opposition thus aroused, from which no one tried to shield me, compelled me, as the only way of regaining liberty to speak out words which God has put in my lips, to give notice that in twelve months I should resign my chair. My resignation was at once accepted; without a word of regret. A few days later, the Conference released me, after vacating my chair, from all promises in reference to further publication of my opinions. And now, after a struggle of nearly eight years, my book is again offered to my fellow-disciples in the school of Christ.

During this long interval no attempt has been made to correct my errors, or to elucidate this matter so greatly needing elucidation. In the Conference of 1904, when the tide was running strongly against me, an able and scholarly writer announced his intention of writing a book to controvert mine; but it has not yet appeared. If others are able to put a better interpretation in the place of mine, they are bound, by their loyalty to the truth

and to Christ, to do so. But this no one has attempted. No one, so far as I know, has challenged my expositions, or ventured openly to discuss the serious moral objections I have brought against the traditional belief. All the more scholarly men I have met either accept my views in the main, or evade the serious issues I have raised. No one has tried to grapple with these issues, to overturn my arguments, or to correct me where I am wrong. In a great theological crisis, they have not ventured to contribute to the service of the Church their own best thoughts.

Some have said that my position as an official teacher of theology is a reason for my silence about a topic on which Wesleyan opinion is divided. Let us see what this principle involves. It is of utmost importance that our chairs of theology be filled by our best theologians. For, unless taught by men who have theological convictions of their own, derived from personal and careful study of the Bible, theology is utter weariness. Of this the theological teaching of the past has given striking and numerous examples. Are we, then, to silence the men most fit to speak and, by speaking, to correct and broaden our theology?

To such humiliation the best teachers will not submit, and their submission would make progressive theological thought impossible.

The official teachers of the Church are bound not to use their position to try to spread among their pupils opinions which many of their supporters repudiate. This I have never done. But every one with strong convictions is bound to find other channels and another audience for teaching what he believes to be important truth. This is best done through the printed page, which every one can read. Moreover, if professors of theology are allowed to believe what they are not allowed to publish, the Church at large will not know their real opinions. Under their silence all sorts of heresies may lie hidden, detected only by their students and by intimate friends. Our only safety, in this age of transition, is in unreserved straightforwardness as to both what we believe and do not believe.

It is utterly vain to try, in these days of intelligent research, to defend the historic faith by suppressing contrary opinion. If our beliefs are true, investigation and even contradiction will only reveal their truth. If they contain error—and with truth error is ever apt

to mingle—to maintain them intact simply because they contain important truth is to expose our faith to the piercing shafts of unrecognised truth: and the error will obscure even the truth we hold. Our defence of our beliefs must be discriminating; guided by an intelligent examination of the grounds on which they rest. The apostolic direction is, “Test all things: hold fast the good.”

Some are greatly afraid of theological controversy. But we are bound, especially those consecrated to the Christian Pastorate, to give to others the results of our researches in things divine. Moreover, being fallible, we need their criticism. And, since this last will also be fallible, there will be room for reply. Such mutual criticism has ever been a chief aid to progress in human thought. To forbid it is to make combined progress impossible. On the other hand, the controversies of the past have done much to elicit truth.

A result of the change of opinion noted above, and of the refusal, by those who ought to be guides in religious thought, to render needed help, is that the solemn topic of the doom of the lost, so conspicuous in the New Testament, has almost vanished from the modern

pulpit. Our preachers know not what to say, or are afraid to say it, or are afraid of the questions which the topic might evoke. The doctrine taught by our fathers cannot be taught now; and would do no good if it were taught. For it no longer appeals to the conscience either of preachers or hearers; or rather, in many of the most intelligent and devout, it rouses to stern revolt all that in them is noblest and best. Such doctrine does more harm than good.

All that I know about opinions now current assures me that, in these days, all effective appeals to the conscience about the doom of the lost must be within the limits marked out in this volume. And these are wide enough for all moral and religious purposes. On the other hand, it is needless and inexpedient, in the pulpit, to confuse the moral issue by repeating my protest against the ancient doctrines which I repudiate. This protest is best discussed elsewhere. For effective public appeals, we shall do well to pass by matters controverted; and to limit our preaching about the doom of the wicked to a solemn and well-proved assertion, along with the Gospel of pardon, that Christ announced, for those who reject Him

and His words utter and endless ruin. Further than this we cannot go without treading on ground uncertain and dangerous.

At the same time, we are bound to impart to all earnest inquirers, without reserve, whatever light on things divine we have received from God. "As each one has received a gift of grace, ministering it for yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." In discharge of this solemn stewardship, and as a small contribution towards a restoration of an important and neglected element in Christ's message to men, I again offer, to all who seek the truth, this volume.

RICHMOND, SURREY,
August 4, 1905.

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PART I

PRELIMINARY

LECTURE I

RETRIBUTION

OVER the whole future hangs a veil of uncertainty, an uncertainty deepening as the unseen future stretches further and further from the living present. At a short distance before us the dark shadow of death falls across the field of view. Behind it looms, on the pages of Holy Scripture, the great catastrophe which will close the present age and dissolve the solid fabric of the visible universe. Beyond this opens a terrible prospect of destruction awaiting those who reject the Gospel of Christ, and all the wicked, a dark counterpart to the eternal glory and blessedness which God has prepared for His faithful servants. The teaching of the Bible, and especially of the New Testament, about these mysterious and profoundly interesting topics, I shall in this volume endeavour to reproduce and expound; and shall, as we pass along, discuss

its significance and worth, and its practical bearing on the present faith and life of the servants of Christ. In PART I. I shall consider the general doctrine of retribution beyond the grave: and the present state of the departed. In PART II. we shall study the teaching of the Bible about the Second Coming of Christ: in PART III. we shall discuss the doom of the wicked: and in PART IV., so far as the twilight of our present ignorance permits, we shall try to catch a glimpse of the eternal home of the children of God.

That these topics belong to the unknown future, warns us to use utmost caution in our investigation. We shall not be surprised to find difficulties we cannot solve. But these insoluble mysteries are no reason for dismissing our studies as useless. All progress even in Natural Science reveals similar difficulties. The force which draws a falling stone and the relation between thought and nerve are utterly incomprehensible. Yet we know something of real use to us touching the path and speed of a falling stone, and about thought and nerve. All progress in Science as in Theology is a winning, from the illimitable domain of the unknown, of rational acquaintance with reality. Our study of the future will reveal to us much which will help us in our daily struggle with evil and in our daily service of Christ. To refuse to seek knowledge because we cannot know everything, is only an excuse for mental indolence.

The mysteries which surround the matters before us also rebuke the ignorant dogmatism which makes hasty assertions, and then refuses to discuss them.

In all the more developed systems of religion, and even among savage tribes, we find an expectation of retribution beyond the grave for all actions done in the present life. Exact retribution beyond death, including punishment of sin, underlies and permeates the philosophy of the HINDUS. So Monier Williams, *Indian Wisdom* (Murray) pp. 66-69: "In order to accomplish the entire working out of these consequences or 'ripenings of acts' as they are called, it is not enough that the personal soul goes to heaven or to hell. . . . The necessity for removal to a place of reward or punishment is indeed admitted; but this is not final or effectual. In order that the consequences of acts may be entirely worked out, the soul must leave heaven or hell and return to corporeal existence. Thus it has to pass through innumerable bodies, migrating into higher, intermediate, or lower forms, from a god to a demon, man, animal, or plant, or even a stone, according to its various shades of merit or demerit.

"This transmigration of the soul through a constant succession of bodies, which is as much a fixed and peremptory doctrine of Buddhism as of Hinduism, is to be regarded as the root of all evil. Moreover by it all the misery, inequality of fortune, and diversity of character in the world is to be explained. For even great genius, aptitude for

special work, and innate excellence are not natural gifts, but the result of habits formed and powers developed through perhaps millions of previous existences. So again, sufferings of all kinds—weaknesses, sicknesses, and moral depravity—are simply the consequences of acts done by each soul, of its own free will, in former bodies, which acts exert on that soul an irresistible power."

The EGYPTIANS taught that endless blessing awaits the righteous, and punishment the wicked. So we read in *The Book of the Dead* (trans. by Budge: Kegan Paul & Co.) ch. 31, rubric: "If this chapter be known by the deceased, he shall come by day, he shall rise up and walk upon the earth among the living, and he shall never fail and come to an end, never, never, never." In the same work, *Introd.* p. cvii, we read: "The evil heart, or the heart that has failed to balance the feather symbolic of the law, was given to the monster Ammit to devour; thus punishment consisted of instant annihilation, unless we imagine that the destruction of the heart was extended over an indefinite period."

Similarly, Wiedemann's *Egyptian Doctrine of Immortality* (H. Grevel & Co.) p. 55: "Nowhere are we clearly informed as to the fate of the condemned who could not stand before the God Osiris. We are told that the enemies of the gods perish, that they are destroyed or overthrown; but such vague expressions afford no certainty as to how far the Egyptians in general believed in the existence of

a hell as a place of punishment or purification for the wicked; or whether, as seems more probable, they held some general belief that when judgment was pronounced against a man his heart and other immortal parts were not restored to him. For such a man no re-edification and no resurrection were possible. The immortal elements were divine, and by nature pure and imperishable; but they could be preserved from entering the Osiris, from re-entering the hull of the man who had proved himself unworthy of them. The soul indeed, as such, did not die, although personal annihilation was the lot of the evil-doer in whom it had dwelt."

The Hindu doctrine of transmigration reappears in the writings of PLATO. So his *Timæus* p. 42: "He who lived well during his appointed time was to return to the star which was his habitation and there he would have a blessed and suitable existence. But if he failed in attaining this, in the second generation he would pass into a woman; and should he not desist from evil in that condition, he would be changed into some brute who resembled him in his evil ways." Also on p. 91: "The race of birds was created out of innocent light-minded men who, although their minds were directed toward heaven, imagined, in their simplicity, that the clearest demonstration of the things above was to be obtained by sight; these were transformed into birds, and they grew feathers instead of hair. The race of wild pedestrian animals, again, came from those who had no philosophy in any of their thoughts, and

never considered at all about the nature of the heavens."

A terrible vision of punishment of sin is given in Plato's *Republic* pp. 615, 616: "For every wrong which they had done to any one they suffered ten-fold. . . . If, for example, there were any who had been the cause of many deaths, or had betrayed or enslaved cities or armies, or been guilty of any other evil behaviour, for each and all of these they received punishment ten times over, and the rewards of beneficence and justice and holiness were in the same proportion. . . . Of piety and impiety to gods and parents, and of murderers, there were retributions other and greater far which he described. He mentioned that he was present when one of the spirits asked another, Where is Ardiæus the Great? (Now this Ardiæus lived a thousand years before the time of Er: he had been the tyrant of some city in Pamphylia, and had murdered his aged father and his elder brother, and was said to have committed many other abominable crimes.) The answer was: He comes not hither and will never come. For, said he, this was one of the dreadful sights which was witnessed by us. We were approaching the mouth of the cave, and, having seen all, were about to re-ascend, when of a sudden Ardiæus appeared and several others, most of whom were tyrants; and there were also besides the tyrants private individuals who had been great criminals: they were just at the mouth, being, as they fancied, about to return into the upper world, but the opening, instead

of receiving them, gave forth a sound, when any of these incurable or unpunished sinners tried to ascend; and then men of wild aspect, who were standing by and knew what that meant, seized and carried off several of them, and Ardiæus and others they bound head and foot and hand, and threw them down and flayed them with scourges, and dragged them along the road at the side, carding them on thorns like wool, and declaring to the passers-by what were their crimes, and that they were being taken away to be cast into Tartarus. . . . These, said Er, were the penalties and punishments, and there were blessings as great."

This expectation of judgment to come, which is found in the literature of nearly all ancient nations and in modern heathenism, was evoked probably by the manifest inequality of retribution in the present life, looked upon in the light of the supreme majesty of the inborn Moral Sense, "the law written in the hearts" of men, of which Paul writes in Rom. ii. 14, 15 as the standard by which in the great day the heathen will be judged; and which forbids us to doubt that its commands will be vindicated by due reward and punishment. Since for such retribution there is not sufficient room in the present life, in all ages men have inferred that a further and perfect retribution awaits all men beyond the grave. The universality of this belief suggests irresistibly that it is due, not to a special revelation like that given to Israel, but to facts before the eyes of all men, interpreted by a moral faculty common to all.

These awful pictures of woe reveal the profound impression made on the minds of thoughtful heathen by the voice which speaks in the inborn moral sense, a voice speaking with an authority from which there is neither appeal nor escape. See Note A.

Throughout the OLD TESTAMENT we find moral retribution as a dominating note. Everywhere man's welfare is conditioned by his right action. In the Pentateuch we read frequently of rewards and punishments following obedience and sin: but these consist chiefly of material benefits to the nation as a whole. The Prophets announce in most forceful language that God will punish sin and bless the righteous: and retribution still more personal is conspicuous in the Book of Psalms. In the later books retribution beyond the grave comes into view. The mysterious Book of Ecclesiastes closes with a solemn warning that "God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good or evil." This suggests irresistibly exact retribution such as is possible only beyond the grave. Still more definitely we read in Dan. xii. 1, 2 of a time to come when "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to eternal life and some to shame, to eternal abhorrence." But, taken as a whole, the Old Testament, so superior to the teaching of the Egyptians, Hindus, and Greeks in knowledge of one God, Maker and Ruler of all things and the righteous Judge of all men, presents a remarkable contrast to the teaching of these other ancient

nations in its almost complete silence about retribution after death. Evidently this doctrine was no part of the revelation given through Moses and the Prophets.

To this silence Christ is Himself a witness in Matt. xxii. 31f, where in reply to the Sadducees, He appeals, not to any express assertion in the Old Testament, but only to God's words calling Himself "the God of Abraham, etc." ; and shows that these words involve Abraham's continued life. This appeal to indirect teaching suggests that the teaching of a future life was in the Old Testament not taught directly. Perhaps it suggests also a reason for this silence. God revealed Himself clearly to Israel as He did not to other nations; and seems, in His infinite wisdom, to have left them to infer from His own nature that the righteous dead live with Him.

In the Book of WISDOM we have clear teaching about a life beyond the grave awaiting the righteous. So chs. ii. 23—iii. 8: "God created man for incorruptibility; and made him an image of His own proper being. But by envy of the Devil death entered into the world: and they that are of his part make trial of it. But righteous men's souls are in God's hand and torment shall not touch them. In the eyes of fools they seemed to be dead, and their departure was reckoned an injury, and their going from us a calamity: but they are in peace. For even if in the sight of men they be punished, their hope is full of immortality: and having been chastened a little they will receive great benefits;

because God tried them, and found them worthy of Himself. As gold in a furnace, He proved them; and as a whole burnt offering He accepted them. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine forth, and as sparks among stubble they shall run to and fro. They shall judge nations, and shall rule peoples: and the Lord shall be their king for ever."

Retribution beyond the grave is a conspicuous feature of the various parts of the *Book of Enoch*. See Lect. iii.

These books, and others similar, reveal a remarkable change which came over Jewish thought during the two centuries preceding the birth of Christ. Evidently, as hopes of political independence and glory faded from view the heart of the nation turned towards a life to come. It is also worthy of note that by this time the Jews had come under Greek rule; and under the influence of Greek thought in which the teaching quoted on p. 5 ff was a powerful factor.

In marked contrast to the silence of the Old Testament, we find in the NEW TESTAMENT frequent and conspicuous announcements of exact retribution beyond death, for actions good and bad, frequently at a definite time in the future. So conspicuously John the Baptist in Matt. iii. 7, 10, 12, etc. At the opening of His ministry, in the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in Matt. vii. 22, 23, Christ declares that "in that day" He will say, to some who claim to have prophesied in His name,

"depart from Me, ye that work lawlessness." A similar picture of retribution for good and bad at a definite time called "the completion of the age" is found in ch. xiii. 41-43. So again in v. 49f, and in chs. xvi. 27, xxv. 31-46. This teaching is a conspicuous feature of the First Gospel. Similarly, in John v. 28f Christ asserts that "an hour comes in which all that are in the graves will hear His voice and will go forth, they who have done the good things to a resurrection of life and they who have done the bad things to a resurrection of judgment." Here again we have a definite time in the future for the reward and punishment of the righteous and the wicked. The phrase *eternal life* in John iii. 15, 16, 36, iv. 14, 36, v. 24, vi. 27, 40, 47, 54 can only refer to a life beyond death.

Inevitable retribution is conspicuous in the epistles of Paul. In Rom. ii. 5 he writes about "a day of wrath and revelation of God's righteous judgment," and in vv. 7-10 about eternal life and tribulation as awaiting the righteous and the wicked respectively. So elsewhere frequently, especially 2 Cor. v. 10, 2 Thess. i. 6-9. In Acts xvii. 31 Paul is recorded to have announced that God "has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness." In Rev. xx. 11-15 the prophet sees a vision of resurrection and judgment: "the sea gave up the dead in it; and death and Hades gave the dead in them: and they were judged, each according to their works."

These passages and others similar prove that the

early followers of Christ believed that final and complete retribution for all actions done on earth awaits all men ; and believed that it will come to them not, as might be expected, at death, but once for all at the close of the present order of things. We have also found proof that Christ's teaching about retribution beyond the grave was in some measure anticipated in the teaching of the Egyptians, and in that of some of the Greeks, and that similar teaching is found in some Jewish writings written in the two centuries immediately preceding the appearance of Christ. That these last bear other indications of the influence of Greek thought, suggests irresistibly that this teaching was derived from the same source.

Touching the method of this retribution, important indications are found in the letters of Paul. For he teaches that, just as the morning light unveils much which lay hidden under the darkness of the night, so the light of the great day will reveal the real nature of actions done in the present life. Under a variety of disguises we hide or try to hide ourselves even from those who know us best. And in the dim twilight of our own inner life we lie partially hidden even from ourselves. For personal bias warps our estimate of our own actions and character. But the light of that day will reveal whatever is hidden now. So 1 Cor. iv. 5 : "until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of the darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. Then shall each

one have his praise from God." Similarly ch. iii. 13f: "each one's work will become manifest. For the day will declare it: because it is revealed in fire; and each one's work, of what sort it is, the fire will test. If any one's work abide, he shall receive reward."

This revelation will itself be, as the above passages suggest, exact retribution. For, even in the imperfect knowledge of the present life, the approbation or condemnation of our fellows is no small reward or punishment. In that day, our actions will be known to all. And, what is still more important, they will be fully known to ourselves. We shall be compelled, in the merciless light from which nothing can hide, to contemplate our sins and their far-reaching and terrible results, and to recognise all these as our own, as inevitable consequences of our own inexcusable folly and depravity. On the other hand, the faithful servants of Christ will, with wonder and with humble gratitude to Him who has wrought in them a good work, contemplate the blessed results of their own labour. "We all must needs be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ, in order that each one may receive the things done through the body, according to what He did, whether good or bad:" 2 Cor. v. 10.

A similar thought is found in Rev. xx. 12: "books were opened . . . and the dead were judged from the things written in the books, according to their works."

LECTURE II

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DEPARTED

THE passages quoted in Lect. i. represent retribution as taking place, not at death when we enter the unseen world, but at a definite time in the future, when judgment will be pronounced, apparently simultaneously, on all men good and bad. This implies an interval between death and this final judgment. The condition of the departed during this interval must differ, not only from their present state, but from their final condition. It is frequently and appropriately called *the Intermediate State*. We now inquire what light the Bible casts on this mysterious interval between the close of man's probation on earth and the judgment of the great day.

In 1 Cor. xv. 6, 18, 51, 1 Thess. iv. 14, 15, the dead servants of Christ are spoken of as having been "laid to sleep;" and in 1 Cor. xv. 20 as "sleeping." So 1 Thess. v. 10: "whether we keep awake, or sleep." Similarly John xi. 11: "Lazarus our friend is sleeping." The word used in this last passage is found also in the Lxx. in the common phrase "slept with his fathers;" e.g. 1 Kings xi. 21, 43.

In Isa. xiv. 8, in reference to the king of Babylon, who is compared to a fallen forest tree, we read, the same word being used, "since thou didst fall asleep, no feller has come up against us." In 2 Macc. xii. 45 the righteous dead are said to be "sleeping with piety." From these passages we learn that the writers of the Bible were accustomed to look upon, and speak about, the righteous dead as "sleeping."

That this conception was wider than Christian or Jewish thought, we learn from Homer's *Iliad* bk. xi. l. 241, where of a man killed in battle we read "he fell, and slept a sleep of brass." Similarly in Sophocles' *Electra* l. 509 we read "drowned in the sea, Myrtillus was laid to sleep."

This wide-spread conception is easily explained. For, to outward appearance and for a time, the dead differ from the living chiefly as being in a deep sleep from which none can awaken them.

This easy explanation forbids an inference, which some have drawn from the passages quoted above, that the dead are unconscious; that, just as in sound sleep we pass at once from our last waking thoughts to the light of morning, so in our last long sleep we shall pass unconsciously from the dark shadow of death to the light of the Judgment Day. This inference becomes the more uncertain when we remember that even bodily sleep is not always a state of unconsciousness, that frequently an appearance of profound repose does but conceal the strange consciousness and activity of a dream.

That the sleep of death was not looked upon by the Greeks as involving unconsciousness, is proved by the picture of the dead given in bk. xi. of the *Odyssey*, where the slain heroes are described as fully conscious, and as deplored their unfortunate lot. All this proves that nothing can be learnt touching the consciousness or unconsciousness of the dead from the metaphor of sleep used by some of the writers of the Bible. It refers only to their outward appearance. We must seek other evidence.

The evidence at our command is scanty. In 2 Cor. v. 6-8 Paul writes about the living as "at home in the body, away from home from the Lord;" and desires "rather to be away from the body and to be at home with the Lord." Similarly in Phil. i. 23. In Luke xxiii. 43 Christ says to the penitent robber, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." In ch. ix. 31 we have, on the mount of transfiguration, a vision of Moses and Elijah talking with Christ about His approaching death; and in ch. xvi. 28 we hear a conversation between Abraham and a departed spirit in torment. In Rev. vi. 9, 10, the souls of martyred servants of Christ cry to God, with loud voice, from beneath the altar for justice on their murderers. To each of these passages appeal has been made, not without reason, as suggesting that the dead, good and bad, are in a state of intelligent consciousness.

But this suggestion lies open to the very serious objection that, if true, reward and punishment precede judgment; an order overturning all our con-

ceptions of justice. For if happiness or woe follow death immediately, a great assize, hundreds of years after death, would be unmeaning: yet throughout the New Testament the reward of the righteous and punishment of the wicked are said to be, not at death, but simultaneously at the Great Day. This serious objection seems to me to have more weight than the above passing references: for, even though unconscious, the righteous dead are safe in the arms of Jesus, resting from the weariness and conflict of life, where none can hurt them. So after a hard day's work we are glad to sleep soundly till the morning light awakes us: and in our sleep we are "at home." The passages quoted above, written for other purposes, with no thought of the question before us, seem to me to have less weight. They may be in part rhetorical, like Gen. iv. 10. On the other hand, the theory of unconsciousness lies open to the serious objection that it leaves no room for any probation beyond the grave, even for those, e.g. little children, who have had no adequate probation here. For we cannot conceive that these last will be lost; nor that in heaven there will be some who have had no conflict and who therefore cannot wear a victor's crown, while others have won the crown by faithfulness in severe trial. All this warns us that the precise condition of the dead lies hidden under what is to us inscrutable mystery. The popular theory that the dead will at once enter their final reward or punishment is contradicted by the plain and abundant teaching

of the New Testament that in the last day they will go forth from their graves to judgment. This implies an intermediate state. But any theory touching their condition during this interval lies open to serious objection. On the other hand, abundant and various evidence, excluding all doubt, assures us that exact retribution beyond the grave awaits all men for all actions done on earth, good and bad; and that the dead servants of Christ are at peace.

See also Notes B. and C.

PART II

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

LECTURE III

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE BOOK OF ENOCH

THE new and complete revelation embodied in the New Testament is not only itself a development of the preliminary supernatural revelations embodied in the Old Testament, but comes to us through the agency of men whose thoughts and phraseology were moulded by these earlier revelations. It is therefore all-important, in order to understand the sense in which the Apostles and Evangelists used their own words and in order to enter into their thoughts, to reproduce first in some measure any teaching of the Old Testament bearing upon the subject now before us and any Old Testament phraseology similar to that used in the New Testament. This I shall do in this lecture. And I shall supplement the teaching of the Old Testament by quoting other similar teaching in an important work which is in some sense a bridge,

in date and in modes of thought, between the Eschatology of the Old Testament and that of the New, viz. the Book of Enoch.

Joel begins his prophecy by announcing a calamity about to overwhelm, in consequence of their sins, the people of Judah and Jerusalem. This calamity he compares to the approach of an irresistible army consuming everything in its path; and the time of its approach he speaks of as the *day of Jehovah*. So Joel i. 15, "Alas for the day: for near is the day of Jehovah, and as destruction from the Almighty it will come;" and ch. ii. 1, 2, "Blow a trumpet in Zion, sound alarm in My holy mountain, let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for there comes the day of Jehovah, for it is near; a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and thick darkness." Then follows a description of the invading army, concluding, in vv. 10, 11, thus: "before it earth trembles, and heaven shakes, sun and moon have become dark, and stars have withdrawn their shining; and Jehovah has uttered His voice before His army; for very great is His camp, for strong is that which does His word, for great is the day of Jehovah and very terrible; who shall endure it?" Then follows an exhortation to repentance, and encouragement to return to Jehovah, the God of Israel.

In ch. ii. 28 (ch. iii. 1 in the Hebrew Bible) the prophet looks beyond the temporal deliverance which will follow repentance to still greater blessings in the future. The dissolution of nature, which in ch. ii. 10 was threatened as following the calamity

announced by the prophet, is here placed in connection with the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh at the coming of the terrible day of Jehovah.

The usual rendering of Joel ii. 31 (Engl.) "before the great and terrible day of the Lord come," suggests that the dissolution of nature is to precede, and thus be distinguished from, the great day of Jehovah: and this is the express rendering of the Lxx. But we cannot conceive of the darkening of the sun as merely preceding this great and terrible day. It must be itself a herald visibly announcing that the day has come. And this is consistent with the meaning of the Hebrew word here used, which I venture to translate "at," or, more literally, "at the presence of the coming of, the day of Jehovah."

Similar language is found again in Joel iii. 14, 15, (Engl.): "Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of Decision: for near is the day of Jehovah in the valley of Decision. Sun and moon have become dark, and stars have withdrawn their shining." The prophecy closes with an announcement of abiding blessing for Zion, and Jerusalem, and Judah; and of desolation for their enemies.

The occurrence of the phrase "day of Jehovah" five times in the short book of Joel gives to this phrase marked prominence. Evidently the prophet looked forward to a definite time of conspicuous punishment to be inflicted on the wicked, accompanied or followed by conspicuous blessing for the righteous.

The same phrase occurs three times in Amos v.

18-20, evidently describing a time when God will inflict punishment. "The day of Jehovah is darkness and not light."

In Isa. ii. 11-17 we read, "The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day. For there shall be a day for Jehovah of hosts upon every one proud and high, and upon all that is lifted up, and it shall be brought low: and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day."

In Isa. xiii. 6, in a prophecy of the destruction of Babylon, Joel i. 15 is repeated almost word for word: "Howl ye; for near is the day of Jehovah, as destruction from the Almighty it will come." The prophet continues in v. 9, in language very similar to Joel ii. 1-11, "Behold the day of Jehovah comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy its sinners out of it. For the stars of the heaven and their constellations shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in its going forth, and the moon shall not cause its light to shine. And I will punish the world for evil, and wicked ones for their guilt."

Similar thought and language are found in Obad. 15, in a denunciation of Edom: "For near is the day of Jehovah upon all the heathen. According as thou hast done, it shall be done to thee; thy recompense shall return upon thy own head."

In Zeph. i. 7-16, after announcing a great destruction for the idolaters in Judah and Jerusalem, the

prophet continues: “Be silent in the presence of the Lord Jehovah ; for near is the day of Jehovah, for Jehovah has prepared a sacrifice, He has sanctified His guests. And it shall be, in the day of Jehovah’s sacrifice, that I will punish the princes and the king’s sons and all that are clothed with foreign clothing. . . . Near is the day of Jehovah, the great day, near and hastening greatly, the sound of the day of Jehovah. . . . That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of waste and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm, against the fenced cities and against the high battlements.”

Similarly, in Ezek. xiii. 5 we read, “Ye have not gone up into the gaps, or made up a fence for the house of Israel in the day of Jehovah.” Also ch. xxx. 3, 4, “Howl ye, alas for the day; for near is a day, and near is a day for Jehovah, a day of cloud, a time of nations it will be. And there shall come a sword against Egypt, and there shall be anguish in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be overturned.”

A marked feature of Zech. xii.-xiv., some fifteen times, is the phrase “in that day,” noting a definite time of retribution and blessing. This time is in Zech. xiv. 1, 2 referred to by the words “Behold a day comes for Jehovah . . . and I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem for war ;” recalling Isa. ii. 12.

The Books of the Prophets conclude, in Mal. iv. 5 (Engl.) with the words "Behold I am sending to you Elijah the prophet at the coming of the day of Jehovah, the great and the terrible day;" word for word as in Joel ii. 31.

In all these places the day of Jehovah is a definite time of conspicuous execution of punishment against sin both in Israel and in the enemies of Israel. During long periods of forbearance, sinners seemed to have their day of high-handed rebellion. But the prophets foresaw that in His own time the unseen God will come forth from His hiding-place and vindicate the majesty of His forgotten authority. And this time, definite to their thought, they spoke of as Jehovah's day.

In many places in which the term "day of Jehovah" is not found, Old Testament prophecy culminates in complete victory of good over evil, manifesting itself in the punishment and downfall of sinners however mighty and in infinite blessing for the righteous. This latter is not unfrequently described in terms of loftiest grandeur. The deep faith in God thus revealed is a conspicuous difference between the Sacred Books of Israel and all contemporary literature.

Other prophetic teaching different from that quoted above both in phraseology and in modes of thought, yet in complete harmony with it, meets us in the Book of Daniel. The vision of Nebuchadnezzar in ch. ii. shows us a succession of empires culminating in, and overthrown by, an empire set up by God and

never to be destroyed. In ch. vii., after a vision of four beasts successively rising from the sea, we read, in *v.* 13f, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven One like a son of man, and He came even to the Ancient of Days; and they brought Him near before Him. And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an eternal dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one which shall not be destroyed." We have here a final victory of Heaven over Earth; and judgment executed (see *v.* 10: "judgment was set, and the books were opened") by One in human form, distinct from the Ancient of Days, yet coming with the clouds of heaven.

In Dan. xii. 1, after various political convulsions, in a time of unparalleled trouble but of deliverance for those written in the book of God, we have a vision of "Michael, the great prince which stands for the sons of thy people." The writer continues, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to eternal life, and some to shame, to eternal abhorrence. And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that justify many, as the stars for ever and ever." This can be no other than a resurrection of the dead, good and bad. And this vision of judgment and of glory forms the distant horizon of the prophet's furthest vision.

The Book of Daniel differs from the other

prophetic books of the Old Testament in that it takes us definitely within the veil to an entirely new order of things; in that the Kingdom which is to supersede all earthly kingdoms is given to One who, though from heaven, is distinct from the Supreme, and wears a human form; and in that it announces clearly a resurrection of the dead and a final retribution of reward and punishment beyond the grave. This difference is one of the many indications of its later date. But all the prophetic writers of the Old Testament agree to announce a Kingdom of infinite glory to be set up more or less suddenly by power from heaven on the ruins of all earthly kingdoms, from which all evil and all sinners shall be excluded, the eternal home of the faithful servants of God.

Such, in scanty outline, were the thoughts of ancient Israel, as recorded in the Old Testament, touching the furthest future within their view.

Any one who turns from the Old Testament Prophets, e.g. Joel or Isaiah, to the Eschatology of the New Testament becomes at once conscious of an immense gulf passed. This gulf, the Book of Daniel does something to span, or at least it affords a starting-point for the transition. But even between the Book of Daniel and the eschatological teaching of the New Testament is a wide interval of thought. We look eagerly for anything which will help us to bridge it. Especially we greet any document which will make vocal the long silence

between the Old Testament and the New. Such help we find in Jewish works written during the interval, and especially in the Book of Enoch.

The following quotations are taken from the admirable edition published in 1893 by the Rev. R. H. Charles, M.A., Clarendon Press, Oxford. The best earlier translation is that of Dillmann, published in A.D. 1853. Indeed to this scholar more than to any other we owe our knowledge of the Book of Enoch. But the forty years which followed the publication of this translation, and especially the British expedition to Abyssinia in 1861-2, have greatly increased the critical apparatus for the text of Enoch; and have enabled Mr. Charles to give us, in English, a much more reliable version of this ancient work.

The following quotations are taken from chs. xxxvii.-lxxi., which together form an integral part of the work, probably its latest part, written as Mr. Charles thinks some hundred years before the public ministry of Christ; and which certainly contain its most developed and interesting eschatological teaching. The quotations are only samples of the teaching of the entire section.

In ch. xlvi. 1-6 we read: "And there I saw One who had a head of days, and his head was white like wool, and with him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man (cp. Dan. vii. 13), and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden

things, concerning that Son of Man, who he was, and whence he was, and why he went with the Head of Days? And he answered and said unto me, 'This is the Son of Man, who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, and his lot before the Lord of Spirits hath surpassed everything in uprightness for ever. And this Son of Man whom thou hast seen will arouse the kings and the mighty ones from their couches and the strong from their thrones, and will loosen the reins of the strong and grind to powder the teeth of the sinners. And he will put down the kings from their thrones and kingdoms because they do not extol and praise him, nor thankfully acknowledge whence the kingdom was bestowed upon them. And he will put down the countenance of the strong, and shame will cover them, darkness will be their dwelling and worms their bed, and they will have no hope of rising from their beds because they do not extol the name of the Lord of Spirits."

In ch. xlvi. 3 we read: "And in those days I saw the Head of Days when he had seated himself on the throne of his glory, and the books of the living were opened before him, and his whole host which is in heaven above and around him stood before him."

Also very interesting is ch. xlvi. 2-6: "And at that hour that the Son of Man was named in the presence of the Lord of Spirits and his name

before the Head of Days. And before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of the heaven were made, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits. He will be a staff to the righteous on which they will support themselves and not fall, and he will be the light of the Gentiles and the hope of those who are troubled of heart. All who dwell on earth will fall down and bow the knee before him, and will bless and laud and celebrate with song the Lord of Spirits." Lower down we read of the wicked, "I will give them over into the hands of mine elect: as straw in fire and as lead in water they will burn before the face of the holy, and sink before the face of the righteous, and no trace of them will any more be found . . . for they have denied the Lord of Spirits and his Anointed." The writer continues in ch. xlix. 2-4, "For he is mighty in all the secrets of righteousness, and unrighteousness will disappear as a shadow, and have no continuance, because the Elect One standeth before the Lord of Spirits, and his glory is for ever and ever, and his might unto all generations. And in him dwells the spirit of wisdom and the spirit of him who gives knowledge, and the spirit of understanding, and of might, and the spirit of those who have fallen asleep in righteousness. And he will judge the secret things, and no one will be able to utter a lying word before him; for he is the Elect One before the Lord of Spirits, according to his good pleasure."

In ch. li. 1-5 we read of a resurrection of body

and soul followed by judgment. "And in those days will the earth also give back those who are treasured up within it, and Sheol also will give back that which it has received, and hell will give back that which it owes. And he will choose the righteous and holy from among them; for the day of their redemption has drawn nigh. And the Elect One will in those days sit on my throne, and all the secrets of wisdom will stream forth from the counsels of his mouth; for the Lord of Spirits hath given it to him and hath glorified him. And in those days will the mountains leap like rams and the hills will skip like lambs satisfied with milk, and they will all become angels in heaven. Their faces will be lighted up with joy because in those days the Elect One hath appeared, and the earth will rejoice, and the righteous will dwell upon it, and the elect will go to and fro upon it."

Again, in ch. lxii. 5-9 we read, "Pain will seize them when they see that Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory. . . . For the Son of Man was hidden before him and the Most High preserved him in the presence of his might, and revealed him to the elect. . . . And all the kings and the mighty and the exalted, and those that rule the earth will fall down on their faces before him and worship, and set their hope upon that Son of Man, and will petition him and supplicate for mercy at his hands."

In an earlier portion of the Book of Enoch, in ch. x. 6, 12, which we have in a fragment of an

early Greek translation, and in chs. xix. 1, xxii. 4, 11, we read of “the day of judgment” and “the great day of judgment,” and the “day of their judgment,” and “the great day of judgment and punishment and torture of the revilers for ever.”

The chief value of the Book of Enoch, and of some other similar works, is that they reveal the large place in Jewish thought during the century before Christ, in the direction of the teaching of the New Testament, occupied by teaching found in the Old Testament only in a few passages in the Book of Daniel. In Dan. vii. 13, we see on the throne a person distinct from the Most High, and said to be “like a son of man.” This we have also in the Book of Enoch. But the Judge is there frequently and definitely spoken of as “the Son of Man;” and we are told that, before the sun and stars were created, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits. We also read much more frequently and definitely than in the Old Testament of retribution beyond the grave in a day of universal judgment. Evidently, during the long and sad interval between the last of the Old Testament prophets and the rousing voice of the Baptist, the heart of Israel turned, amid surrounding gloom, to a life beyond the grave. And, while they did so, their hopes gathered round One whom they conceived as bearing a human form yet coming from heaven.

LECTURE IV

THE TEACHING OF PAUL

WE shall now reproduce the conception of the Second Coming of Christ reflected in the Epistles of Paul, and endeavour to determine the place and comparative importance of this topic in his conception of the Gospel as a whole. In so doing, we will take the epistles in chronological order. And with them we will compare some references to the same subject in addresses of Paul recorded in the Book of Acts.

In 1 Thess. i. 10 Paul describes his readers' conversion as a turning "from the idols to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven." This implies that during the few weeks in which he had founded the Church at Thessalonica he had taught his young converts that Christ, "raised from the dead," will return from heaven to earth; and implies also that an expectation of His return was a conspicuous element of the new life and hope which they had received.

In ch. ii. 19 we read, "what is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Are not even ye before our Lord Jesus at His coming?" Similarly in ch.

iii. 13 : "establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints." In ch. iv. 13-18, Paul seeks to remove sorrow caused by the death of some members of the Church by pointing to the return of Christ and to the consequent resurrection of the dead. In contrast to those for whom his readers mourn, the apostle speaks of himself and them as "being left behind for the coming of the Lord." In each of these three passages, and in others similar, the English rendering *coming* represents the conspicuous Greek word *παρουσία*, which, as a technical term for the Return of Christ, we may transliterate *parousia*, and which now demands attention.

Like the verb *πάρεστι*, the substantive *παρουσία* denotes the presence of some one standing by. So Phil. ii. 12, where it is contrasted with *ἀπουσία*, "not as in my *presence* only, but now much more in my absence :" and 2 Cor. x. 10, "the *presence* of the body (i.e. Paul's bodily presence) is weak." More frequently it denotes the presence of a fresh arrival. So 1 Cor. xvi. 17, "I rejoice at the *coming* (*ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ*) of Stephanas;" 2 Cor. vii. 6, 7, "the *coming* of Titus," twice ; Phil. i. 26, "my *coming* again to you." The same word is used to describe the coming of Christ for which the Christians at Thessalonica were waiting, in 1 Thess. ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 15, quoted above; in ch. v. 23, 2 Thess. ii. 1, 8, 1 Cor. xv. 23, as also in James v. 7, 8, 2 Peter i. 16, iii. 4, 12, 1 John ii. 28, Matt. xxiv. 3, 27, 37,

39. This use of the same word with the same reference by different writers of the New Testament proves it to be a technical term of the early followers of Christ denoting their Master's expected return. And its suitability is at once apparent. Touching His bodily form, Christ is now *absent* in heaven: on that day He will be visibly *present* on earth. And His presence will bring in at once the great consummation for which His followers are waiting.

The *coming* of Christ and its immediate consequences are described with graphic detail in 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17: "the Lord Himself, with shout, with voice of archangel, and with trumpet of God, (notice the climax,) will come down from heaven; and the dead in Christ will rise first." Then will the living, who, as Paul writes, are "being left behind" by the hand of death while others are taken away, be snatched up, along with those just raised from the dead, into a supermundane region, surrounded by clouds, to meet their Lord. And, "in this way" entering into His presence, they will be with Him for ever.

This graphic description proves that the word *parousia* in this and similar passages denotes, not spiritual intercourse in the unseen world, but a bodily arrival of Christ.

The word *first* emphasises the priority of this resurrection to the meeting of the living ones with Christ. It thus supports the assertion in v. 15: "we, the living ones, . . . shall in no wise precede those

that have fallen asleep." It finds a counterpart in v. 17: "the dead in Christ will rise *first*; *then* the living ones . . . shall be caught up." This simple and complete explanation of these words forbids us to infer from them a later resurrection of the dead without Christ. Of these last, nothing whatever is here said. Writing as a servant of Christ, the apostle thinks only of his fellow-servants, dead and living. Evidently the words "we the living" refer only to believers. For they only "will be for ever with the Lord." All others lie outside the writer's thought. We have simply the shout, the descent, the resurrection, and the snatching up of the living servants of Christ to meet Him in the air.

In 1 Thess. v. 2 we read that the "day of the Lord so comes as a thief at night." The words *ἡμέρα Κυρίου* are already familiar to us as the Lxx. rendering of "the day of Jehovah" in the passages from the prophets quoted in Lect. iii. It is impossible to doubt that here the *day of the Lord* is the time of the return of Christ already mentioned in each of the first four chapters of this epistle. And, if so, v. 3 asserts that the coming of Christ, which to His servants dead and living will be a reunion with their Lord, will be to others "sudden destruction." This is in close agreement with the passages from the Old Testament quoted in Lect. iii., in which the day of Jehovah is described as a time of punishment to the wicked, and of blessing to the righteous. It implies that at Christ's coming there will be sin and sinners upon earth.

Then follows a beautiful metaphor based on the word *day*. To the wicked, the return of Christ will come suddenly and unexpectedly, "as a thief at night," under cover of darkness. But Paul's readers "are not in darkness." Consequently, "the day" will not "lay hold" of them "as does a thief." They are "sons of light and sons of day." The apostle bids them act as such, as men do who walk in light, whom no thief can surprise. The same metaphor meets us again, in a later group of Paul's letters, in Rom. xiii. 11-13: "The hour has come that we at once awake from sleep. . . . The night is far spent, the day has drawn near. Let us then put off the work of darkness and put on the weapons of the light. As in the day, let us walk decently." In contrast to the day of the Lord, the present life seemed to this great teacher to be but the passing hours of a "night." And already to the eye of faith the dawning light proclaims that the day is near.

The word *parousia* meets us for the fourth time in this short epistle in 1 Thess. v. 23, where Paul prays that his readers may be "preserved blamelessly in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." He desires that in the day of judgment they may be found blameless.

In a second letter to the same Church at Thessalonica, the apostle writes to correct, apparently, a misunderstanding of his earlier letter. He speaks in ch. i. 6 of a just recompense, viz. affliction for those who afflict, and for those who are afflicted rest; and speaks of this as taking place "at the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven with angels

of His power." We have here another phrase describing evidently the coming of Christ for which the Thessalonican Christians were waiting, "the *revelation* (or *unveiling*) of the Lord Jesus." He is now hidden from our view; but in that day the veil will be rent, and the hidden One will appear. In other words, the coming of Christ will be not only audible but visible. Since the veiled One is in heaven, and on that day will appear on earth, the unveiling is said to be "from heaven:" as in 1 Thess. iv. 16 we read that He "will come down from heaven." He will be accompanied by inhabitants of heaven, ministers of His power; and by *fire*, the most searching of natural forces.

The punishment and persons punished, already described in 2 Thess. i. 6, and the punishment said in *v.* 7 to be inflicted at the revelation of the Lord Jesus, are in *vv.* 8, 9 further specified. He will inflict justice, i.e. just punishment, on "those who know not God, and those who obey not the Gospel." Their penalty will be "eternal destruction," removing them "from the face" of Christ and from the splendour which belongs to the power which on that day He will put forth or perhaps a destruction proceeding from the manifested presence of Christ, as in ch. ii. 8.

The time of this punishment is further described as "when He shall come to be glorified in (or among) His saints, and to be wondered at in all those that believed." The words "when He shall come," used evidently as an equivalent to "at the revelation

of the Lord Jesus" in v. 7, still further identify this last phrase as a description of the great event for which the readers of this epistle were waiting. The words "in that day" recall the same words in Isa. ii. 11 and fifteen times in Zech. xii.-xiv., as quoted in Lect. iii. It is another link between the "day of the Lord" in the New Testament and the "day of Jehovah" in the Old.

In 2 Thess. ii. 1 Paul speaks again "about the coming (*parousia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together before Him." He warns his readers against supposing that "the day of the Lord has come," i.e. is now beginning; thus linking together, as technical terms for the same event, the *parousia* and "the day of the Lord." He adds that Christ will not come until "the Apostasy come first;" that there will be no "revelation of the Lord Jesus" until "the man of sin be revealed:" ch. ii. 3. This "son of destruction" is then further described. Something now holds him back, in order that he "may be revealed in his (appropriate) season." The revelation of this "lawless one" is in ch. ii. 9 described as a *parousia*, and as accompanied by a manifold and mighty activity of Satan which will deceive and destroy those who refuse to believe the truth. This use of the same words *parousia* and *revelation* (or *revealed*) to describe the advent of the "son of destruction" and that of Christ places these two antagonistic forces in conspicuous and awful contrast.

This teaching implies that the coming of Christ

will be preceded by the appearance of a new and terrible form of evil. In marked contrast to this future *revelation* we are told in *v.* 7 that “the *mystery* of lawlessness is already working,” although under restraint. When this restraint is removed, it will be *revealed*, i.e. will work, no longer secretly, but openly. This revelation marks a conspicuous development of evil on earth. What this new form of evil will be, we know not except as it is dimly shadowed forth in this chapter. But, that its manifestation is evidently to be a new era in the working of the kingdom of darkness, implies that it will be altogether different from all kinds of evil now seen at work around us. We must be content with the general description here given, viz. that it will be an activity of Satan, that it will claim divine honours, and will delude those who reject the light of the Gospel.

The course of events is further described in *vv.* 7, 8. We have a restraining influence, “until it be taken out of the way: and then will the Lawless One be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the breath of His mouth and will bring to nothing by the appearance of His *coming*:” $\tau\bar{h}$ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας. This implies that the coming of Christ will be visible, that up to the moment of His appearance a new and terrible form of evil will be in power, and that this hostile power will fade into nothing at the voice and appearance of Christ.

Such is the clear and harmonious teaching of the Epistles to the Thessalonians. Paul was looking for

a definite time when Christ will audibly and visibly return from heaven to earth, to raise His dead servants, to welcome all His servants dead and living into endless and blessed intercourse with Himself, and to destroy all who refuse to obey the Gospel. He taught also that this revelation of Christ, who is now hidden from our view, will be preceded by an outward manifestation, in some new and awful form, of that evil which is already secretly operating among men, and that this new manifestation of it will continue in power until it be dethroned by the appearance of Christ.

The frequent occurrence, in these early epistles, of the terms *parousia*, *day of the Lord*, *revelation*, *appearance*, which we shall find used frequently not only in the other epistles of Paul but also in other parts of the New Testament, proves that they were already technical terms used to describe the expected return of Christ.

Similar teaching is found in Paul's other letters; but not with equal prominence. The Corinthian Christians, as we read in 1 Cor. i. 7, 8, were "waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and the apostle hoped that "in the day of our Lord Jesus" they will be without reproach. So familiar to his thought was that time that he speaks of it in ch. iii. 13 as "the day," and declares, in close agreement with 2 Thess. i. 8, that "it will be revealed in fire," and that the fire will test every man's work and determine his reward. In chs. iv. 5, xi. 26, we have casual references to the coming of Christ.

In 1 Cor. xv. 20-23 Paul asserts, as already in 1 Thess. iv. 14, 16, that just as Christ rose from the dead so will His servants rise: “as firstfruit, Christ, then they who are Christ’s at His *coming* (*ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ*), then the end.” Here, as in 1 Thess. iv. 16, Paul speaks only of the resurrection of the servants of Christ. All others are throughout the chapter left entirely out of sight. So especially in v. 43, “it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power:” words true only of the saved. This being so, we have no right to infer from the passage before us that at the coming of Christ only His people will rise.

The resurrection of the righteous is more fully described in vv. 50-57. We have here not only a definite day but a definite moment, and we have again the sound of a trumpet, a sound never to be repeated; “in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.” And, as before, the trumpet will be at once followed by resurrection of the dead. As before, the raising of the dead will affect the living. But we are now told that these last will be changed. This change is made needful by the constitution of their bodies, which unfits them for the consummation: for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.” But the corruptible and mortal will clothe itself with incorruptibility and deathlessness. This will be the last victory over the last enemy.

The resurrection of believers mentioned in this chapter is evidently bodily: “it is sown an animal

body, it is raised a spiritual body." So Rom. viii. 11, "will make alive your mortal body;" and Phil. iii. 21, "will transfigure the body of our humiliation." Consequently, the resurrection of Christ must also be bodily. For a merely spiritual manifestation of Christ after His death could not remove objections to a bodily resurrection of believers. And if the resurrection of Christ and of His people be bodily, Christ's return to earth must also be bodily. In other words, Paul expected that the body of Christ raised (Rom. viii. 34) from the grave to heaven will in that day return from heaven to earth.

This expectation does not imply that the resurrection body of believers will contain the same particles of matter as that laid in the grave. Indeed these particles do not continue the same during life. But it seems to me to imply that our spirits will again clothe themselves in bodily forms; in forms related probably, in some way to us inconceivable but real, to the bodies laid in the grave.

In 1 Cor. xv. 51, as in 1 Thess. iv. 15, Paul puts himself among those who will survive the coming of Christ: "we, the living, who are being left for the coming of Christ," and "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." This implies fairly that the apostle did not know that long ages would elapse between his own day and the day of Christ. But we have no right to infer that he had a definite and confident expectation that he would himself survive to that day. For, in rhetorical figure he often identifies himself with that which he describes:

e.g. Rom. iii. 7, "If the truth of God by my lie abounded for His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?" Probably in this matter hope and fear alternated with his circumstances and his frame of mind. In 2 Cor. v. 6-8, he certainly ponders the possibility of his own death; influenced perhaps by the deadly peril referred to in ch. i. 9. Still, finding himself preserved from day to day, and not knowing how soon Christ will appear, he might easily look upon, and write about, himself as "being left for the coming of Christ," in contrast to those who had fallen asleep.

This hope, thus faintly expressed, was not destroyed by Paul's knowledge that the appearance of "the lawless one" must precede the coming of Christ. For, the wonderfully rapid progress of the Kingdom of God during the last twenty-five or thirty years permitted a hope that possibly the remaining years of his life might suffice for the appearance and short reign of the man of sin and for his destruction by the appearance of Christ. In any case, Paul's hope of himself surviving the coming of Christ, which finds indefinite expression only in these two passages, is no essential part of his plain and abundant and conspicuous teaching that Christ will return to raise the dead and judge all men.

It is worthy of note that the clearest expression of this hope is in the earliest of Paul's letters; and that the only other expression of it is in what is probably the earliest letter of the second group.

In another letter of the same group he weighs the possibility of his death; and does this more seriously in a letter of the third group, that to the Philippians. In the last of his letters, the second to Timothy, he contemplates the near approach of death.

We notice also that in Acts xx. 24, 29, in an address given before his arrest at Jerusalem and therefore some years before his death, Paul refers to the close of his career, "that I may complete my course;" and says that after his "departure wolves will enter into," and "not spare, the flock." This proves that the historian did not believe that at that time Paul confidently expected to survive the coming of Christ. And a unanimous tradition reaching back to the second century, supported by internal evidence, asserts that the historian was a friend and companion of the apostle. These references to his death, in 2 Cor. v. 6-8, Acts xx. 24, 29, have more weight touching Paul's actual expectation than have the two casual allusions in his epistles quoted above. Certainly, a confident expectation that he would survive the coming of Christ was no part of his faith. But abundant evidence in nearly all his epistles leaves no room to doubt that he confidently and joyfully expected, at some unknown time, the bodily return of Christ to raise the dead and to bring in the eternal glory.

Resurrection of the dead is mentioned in 2 Cor. iv. 14: "He that raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus." In ch. v. 10, the apostle asserts that himself and his readers "must be made manifest

before the judgment-seat of Christ, in order that each one may receive the things done through the instrumentality of the body . . . whether good or bad." This suggests irresistibly a simultaneous judgment of good and bad men. In Rom. xiv. 10 we have similar teaching.

The Epistle to the Galatians contains no clear reference to the Second Coming of Christ. But we have in ch. vi. 7, 8, a solemn assertion of exact retribution.

In Rom. ii. 5 we read of a "day of anger and of revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will give back to each one according to his works;" and in v. 16 of a "day when God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ." In ch. viii. 19-23 Paul declares that the whole "creation is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God;" and that himself and his readers are "waiting for the redemption of the body." This passage implies that salvation will not be complete until the bodies of the adopted sons of God are rescued from the grave. In ch. xi. 25, 26 he speaks of hardening as having come to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles come in; and says that then "all Israel will be saved." This implies real progress of the Kingdom of God under the present order of things. After this progress, we must place the great apostasy mentioned in an earlier epistle. To Rom. xiii. 11-13, xiv. 10, I have already referred.

In Phil. 1. 6, in the third group of Paul's letters, we read of the "day of Jesus Christ" as the time

of the completion of the good work already begun in the Christians at Philippi. In ch. iii. 11 he speaks of "the resurrection from the dead" (*ἐκ νεκρῶν*) as the ultimate goal of his desire and effort. The phrase here used is found elsewhere only in Luke xx. 35, for the resurrection of believers, and in Acts iv. 2, 1 Peter i. 3, for that of Christ. It suggests a removal of the risen ones from among the dead; and is therefore inapplicable to, and is never used for, the lost. For they "shall not see life" (John iii. 36); and will be still dead and among the dead even when risen. But this by no means implies or suggests an earlier resurrection of the saved. For two very different resurrections may take place at the same time; as we read in John v. 29.

In Phil. iii. 20, 21 we read, in close harmony with the passages quoted above, "our commonwealth is in heaven, whence we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transfigure the body of our humiliation conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things to Himself." This transfiguration must include the raising of the dead and the complete change of those who survive the coming of Christ. Each of these will demand a putting forth of the infinite power of Christ. These verses prove that the alternative of death and life which in ch. i. 20-24 Paul ponders so seriously did not prevent him from joining in the joyful hope of glory shared by all the servants of Christ in his day.

In Eph. iv. 30 the readers are reminded that in the Holy Spirit they "were sealed for the day of redemption." This "redemption" can be no other than that of the body, which will rise from the bondage of death on the day of Christ's return. The appearance of Christ is mentioned in Col. iii. 4: "When Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory." These casual references, amid topics quite different, reveal, deeply rooted in the thought of Paul, an expectation of the return of Christ to complete the salvation already begun.

In the last group of his epistles, in 1 Tim. vi. 14, we read, "without reproach till the *appearance* ($\tau\hat{\eta}s \acute{e}pi\varphiave\acute{e}ias$, as in 2 Thess. ii. 8) of our Lord Jesus Christ." So Titus ii. 13, "waiting for the blessed hope and *appearance* of the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Christ Jesus." In 2 Tim. i. 10 the same word is used of the first coming of Christ, thus putting it in conspicuous relation to His second coming. In v. 18 Paul prays that Onesiphorus "may find mercy from the Lord in *that day*." So v. 12: "able to guard to *that day*." These last words, already found in 2 Thess. i. 10, occur again in 2 Tim. iv. 8, "the crown which the Lord will give me in *that day*, the righteous Judge; and not to me only but to all them that love His *appearance*." This last word ($\acute{e}pi\varphiave\acute{e}ia$), already found in 2 Thess. ii. 8, 1 Tim. vi. 14, Titus ii. 13, 2 Tim. i. 10, iv. 8, occurs also in 2 Tim. iv. 1: "I charge thee in the sight of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge

the living and the dead, and by His *appearance* and His Kingdom."

In Paul's address at Athens, recorded in Acts xvii. 22-31, we read, in v. 31, "He has set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, in a Man whom He has marked out." In Acts xxiv. 15 he expresses his hope in God "that there will be a resurrection both of righteous men and of unrighteous." These are the only references to the Second Coming of Christ in Paul's recorded speeches.

From the foregoing it will appear that Paul's teaching about the Second Coming of Christ is, both in thought and phraseology, the same in all his epistles. Indeed the chronological order of his letters does not reveal in this subject, as it does in some others, development of thought. Evidently his thought on this topic was fully matured when he wrote his earliest epistles.

It is also worthy of note that in these letters written to recent converts, the subject before us occupies a much larger place than it does in those written afterwards to older churches. This suggests that Paul looked upon this topic as belonging to the rudiments of the Christian faith. And this we can well understand. In the synagogue at Thessalonica he preached, as we read in Acts xvii. 3, that Jesus is the Anointed Deliverer and that He had risen from the dead. He certainly added (cp. Acts xiii. 38) that through Him is proclaimed forgiveness of sins for all who believe His words. It was natural for him to add, as we infer from 2 Thess. i. 6, 7,

that He who was raised from the dead will return to reward or punish those who accept or reject His offered salvation. But when converts were gathered together into churches, they would need other teaching about the practical bearing of the Gospel upon the details of personal and social life. This further and more varied teaching would occupy attention, and thus leave less room in the later epistles, as there was less need, for teaching about a topic already sufficiently understood. And, as we have seen, occasional references are not wanting, even in these later letters. The large space occupied by this subject in 1 Thessalonians was also caused apparently by the unexpected death of some church-members and the sorrow caused thereby: the second letter was written (ch. ii. 1) in part to correct a misunderstanding caused by the first.

The Second Coming of Christ can scarcely be reckoned among the great fundamental doctrines of the Gospel as Paul understood it. In the systematic exposition of that Gospel given in the Epistle to the Romans, it has no prominent place; and it receives only casual mention in the profound Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. But, while occupying only a subordinate place, it is, as the above quotations prove, an essential part (cp. Rom. ii. 16) of the Gospel of Paul.

Much less important is the Apostle's faint hope of himself surviving the return of Christ. For this hope finds casual and indefinite expression only in two places, in his earlier epistles; whereas his

confident expectation that Christ will, in bodily form, return to raise the dead and judge all men finds definite expression in all his epistles except those to the Galatians and to Philemon, each of which deals with special and personal topics; and is a conspicuous feature of three of them, viz. 1 and 2 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians.

We may now sum up the expectation of the greatest of the apostles of Christ touching the future. Paul looked forward to continued progress of the Gospel, to the gathering in of the fulness of the Gentiles and then of Israel. But beyond this progress he foresaw an awful manifestation, in a new and conspicuous form, of the evil already working in the wicked. This new revelation of evil, in the moment of its power, Christ will dethrone and destroy by His sudden and audible and visible appearance from heaven. At His coming, His dead servants will wake up from their long sleep; and with the changed forms of those still living will enter into the eternal and glorious Kingdom of Christ and of God.

LECTURE V

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

WE shall now consider the teaching of documents presenting a definite type of thought differing widely from that embodied in the Epistles of Paul.

The phrase "that day," already found in 2 Thess. i. 10, 2 Tim. i. 12, 18, iv. 8, occurs again in Matt. vii. 22, xxiv. 36, Mark xiii. 32, Luke x. 12, xvii. 31, xxi. 34; referring in each case to Christ's return to judge the world. Its use, without further specification, in this definite sense, reveals the definite place of the day of judgment in the thought of the early followers of Christ. The words "till the Son of Man come," in Matt. x. 23, recall at once Dan. vii. 13, "there came with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man;" and the similar teaching in the Book of Enoch, quoted in Lect. iii. This reminiscence is confirmed by the frequent use in the Synoptic Gospels of the term *Son of Man* in reference to His return to judge the world. (See below.) That in the casual allusion before us the word *come* is considered sufficiently definite to indicate our Lord's meaning, proves that His coming was already familiar to His disciples.

The coming of Christ is depicted in plain language

in Matt. xiii. 40-43: "So will it be at the completion of the age. The Son of Man will send His angels, and they will gather out of His Kingdom all the snares and those that do lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the wailing and the gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

Still more definite is Matt. xvi. 27, 28; "The Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He will give back to each according to his action. Verily, I say to you, there are some of those standing here who will not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." Notice here twice the term *Son of Man*. The *coming* mentioned in v. 27 is evidently Christ's coming to judge the world: for only then "will He give back to each one according to his action." And it is difficult to give any other meaning to the words "see the Son of Man coming" in v. 28. Yet nothing happened during the lifetime of the men then standing around Christ which could fairly and intelligibly be described by the words "see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." Certainly there was no visible coming of Christ, as some have suggested, at the destruction of Jerusalem. Nor did He then judge the world, as announced in v. 27 and in ch. xxv. 32.

This serious difficulty is, I think, somewhat relieved by a comparison with the parallel passages in the Second and Third Gospels. In Mark ix. 1 Christ

is represented as saying "until they see the Kingdom of God having come in power." The Greek perfect *ἐληλυθοῦσαν* describes the abiding effect of the coming of the Kingdom of God. In Luke ix. 27 we read simply "till they see the Kingdom of God." Now the general context, and especially the words "there are some of those standing here who will not taste death till they see," which are found almost word for word in each of the Synoptists, leave no room for doubt that the three are reports of the same discourse of Christ. But we notice that, whereas Matthew¹ speaks of seeing "the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom," Luke speaks only of seeing "the Kingdom of God," and Mark of seeing "the Kingdom of God come in power." The second and third phrases describe appropriately the events of the day of Pentecost. On that day, the apostles, who a few months before had heard, standing by Christ, the words now before us, saw the Kingdom of God actually set up on earth in a manner unknown before, and amid a wonderful manifestation of the power of God. If this exposition be correct, the coming of the Son of Man in Mark viii. 38 and the coming of the Kingdom of God in the next

¹ The use of the names "Matthew" and "Mark" to distinguish the Gospels does not involve any assumption about their authorship. But it is right to say that the four Gospels were accepted without a shadow of doubt, in the latter part of the second century, by all early Christian writers who refer to their authorship, as written by the men whose names they now bear: See Irenæus bk. iii. 1¹. This implies their very early date, and recognised authority.

verse (so Luke ix. 26, 27) refer to different events: and this is permitted or suggested by the different words used, by Mark and Luke, in the consecutive verses. On the other hand, in Matt. xvi, 27, 28, the similar phraseology suggests irresistibly a reference, in both verses, to the same event.

The only explanation of all this, which I can suggest, is that of the three reports before us the second and third, which are practically the same, reproduce more correctly the words actually spoken by Christ; and that the account given in the First Gospel was coloured by the eager hope of the early followers of Christ for their Master's speedy return.

The hope thus expressed has important apologetic value. For no writer or compiler in the second century, when the last survivor of the days of Christ had long ago passed away, would have represented Christ as saying that some around Him would survive His coming to judge the world. Consequently the passage before us is a sure indication of the early date of the First Gospel: and the early date, thus proved, greatly increases its value as a witness of what Christ actually did and said. If our Lord spoke the words attributed to Him in the Second and Third Gospels, we can easily understand how His contemporaries, confusing two distinct events, each of which was then hidden in the unknown future, attributed to Him the words recorded in Matt. xvi. 27, 28, words differing in form so little, though in meaning so much, from those which He seems to have actually used. But this confusion would have

been impossible after our Lord's meaning had been made clear by events. This important evidence of early date abundantly compensates for the difficulty now before us.

In Matt. x. 23 Christ enjoins His disciples when persecuted in one city to flee to another; and supports His injunction by adding, "For verily, I say to you, ye will not have completed the cities of Israel till the Son of Man come." These words, which have no parallel in the other Synoptists, are not, like ch. xvi. 28, an explicit assertion, but only a casual allusion. It is, however, an allusion which could not have been made after the land of Israel had for more than a generation been depopulated of its ancient inhabitants. It is therefore another sure mark of the very early date of the First Gospel.

In Luke xvii. 22-37, a passage which has no exact counterpart in the other Synoptists, although containing verses which have close parallels there, we read, in close agreement with 2 Thess. i. 7, of the "day when the Son of Man is *revealed*." This day is compared, in Luke xvii. 26, to the "day when Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and took them all away;" and in v. 29 to the "day when Lot went forth from Sodom, and it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed all." Our Lord thus teaches, in close agreement with 1 Thess. v. 3, that His coming will be to the wicked a sudden and overwhelming destruction; and, as Paul teaches more fully in 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, that it will be preceded by general demoralisation.

The important and difficult parallel chapters, Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi. 5-36, demand now careful study.

In all three Synoptists, the discourse is introduced by the disciples showing to Christ the beautiful buildings of the temple, and by Christ's reply that the time will come when of those buildings not one stone will be left upon another. The disciples ask Him, (some time afterwards and sitting upon the Mount of Olives, as Matthew and Mark narrate,) "When shall these things be?" To this question Matthew adds another, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming (*parousia*) and of the completion of the age?" The word *parousia* recalls at once the same word used frequently by Paul, in a technical sense, for the return of Christ to judge the world. The phrase "completion of the age" we have found already in Matt. xiii. 39, 40, 49, denoting the close of the present order of things by the final judgment; and in ch. xxviii. 20, denoting the close of the evangelical activity of the servants of Christ. The use elsewhere of the terms *parousia* and *completion of the age* suggests irresistibly that both refer to one event, and to the event to which the former term refers when used by Paul.

To these questions our Lord replies by words of warning, "See that no one deceive you;" and then opens to His disciples a vista of tumults and persecutions, concluding with an announcement, "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a testimony to all the nations: and then

shall come the *end.*" The word *τέλος* refers evidently to the *συντελεία τοῦ αἰώνος* about which the disciples had questioned their Master.

Next follows a practical and positive direction. The sign given by Matthew and Mark is "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place," or "where it must not" stand : that given by Luke is "Jerusalem surrounded by camps." But in all three the injunction is the same, with one trifling exception, word for word : "Then let those in Judæa flee to the mountains." Then follows (Matthew and Mark) unheard-of tribulation ; and (Luke) slaughter and the people carried away captive to all lands, and "Jerusalem trodden under foot by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." These last words suggest that the destruction of the city will be followed by a long period of desolation.

After these words, Luke represents Christ as announcing the dissolution of nature and the appearance of the Son of Man in the sky. Matthew and Mark give a warning against false-Christians and false-prophets, and add "immediately after the tribulation of those days" (Matthew) or "in those days, after that tribulation" (Mark) "the sun shall be darkened . . . and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds." The appearance of Christ will be followed, as He teaches here and elsewhere in these Gospels, by the sending forth of His angels to gather together His people from the ends of the earth.

An important turning-point common to the three

accounts of this discourse is found in Matt. xxiv. 32, Mark xiii. 28, Luke xxi. 29, in the parable of the fig tree putting forth its young shoots as harbingers of approaching summer. In each account, this parable is followed by the assertion, given in almost identical words, "Verily I say to you, this *generation* shall not pass away until all these things take place." The word *γενεά* can refer only to the men living in Christ's day. And, at first sight, the words "all these things" seem to include the appearance of Christ from heaven. But this first impression is somewhat modified by the verse following, which is the same almost word for word in the First and Second Gospels: "But about that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, except My Father only." For, in these words, the day of Christ's return, which is unknown even to the Son, is placed in conspicuous contrast to events which will happen during the present generation. The colourless English rendering "*that day*" poorly reproduces the emphasis of the Greek pronoun *ἐκείνης* which points conspicuously to something at a distance from the speaker. This contrasted collocation suggests that the words "all these things" in Matt. xxiv. 34, Mark xiii. 30, may refer to the fall of Jerusalem, and the verse following to the Second Coming of Christ. This explanation, however, does not apply to the Third Gospel, which has no parallel to the verse in question.

The above explanations remove the difficulty before us, even in the First and Second Gospels,

only partially. All three reports of this important discourse of Christ seem to be coloured by the eager hopes of the first generation of the followers of Christ. And this colouring bears witness to the very early date of the tradition embodied in the Synoptic Gospel.

Then follows in Matthew and Mark a comparison of the coming of Christ to the Flood, similar to that recorded, at an earlier period of our Lord's ministry, in Luke xvii. 26, 27; and in all three Gospels a warning to watch.

As the Bridegroom in the parable of the Ten Virgins, the coming of Christ is mentioned again in Matt. xxv. 5, and we notice that He is represented as lingering; another indication of delay in Christ's return, among indications that His return was close at hand. This apparent contradiction is easily explained by the uncertainty of the early Christians about an eagerly expected event still future. A similar indication of delay is found in *v.* 19: "After a long time the Lord of those servants comes." The whole parable refers evidently to Christ's coming in the Day of Judgment.

In *vv.* 31-46 we have another description of the coming of Christ to judge all men good and bad: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He shall sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all the nations, and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." Then follow a welcome to the

righteous, and a tremendous sentence on the wicked; in close agreement with the teaching of Paul.

The coming of Christ to judge the world is one of the most conspicuous features of the First Gospel. And, with the exception of somewhat varying indications of the earlier or later time of His return, the picture is harmonious throughout. Equally harmonious and scarcely less conspicuous, is the teaching of the Second and Third Gospels. Still more remarkable, considering the wide difference in forms of expression and modes of thought between the Synoptic Gospels, especially the First Gospel, on the one hand, and the Epistles of Paul on the other, is the close agreement, both in thought and diction, of all these documents touching the matter before us. The only real differences are that the hope of an early return of Christ, which in the Epistles of Paul finds only faint expression in two ambiguous passages, finds in the Synoptic Gospels, especially in the First Gospel, much more definite expression; and that the new and terrible form of evil foretold by Paul is by the Evangelists only suggested in a comparison of the days before Christ's return with those before the Flood. The eager desire of some of His followers anticipated their Lord's return as close at hand: but the sober thought of Paul warns them that before the coming of Christ there must come first an embodiment of evil in its most awful form.

The same teaching about the return of Christ is

found, though less conspicuously, in the Book of Acts. In ch. i. 11, angels announce to the disciples on Olivet, "this Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will so come in the manner in which ye saw Him going into heaven." In Acts iii. 19-21 Peter sets before his hearers a hope "that there may come times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Christ Jesus, fore-appointed for you, whom heaven must needs receive until the times of restitution of all things." He speaks again in ch. x. 42 of Jesus as "ordained by God Judge of men living and dead." Similarly Paul at Athens, as recorded in Acts xvii. 31, preached that God had "set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by a Man whom He has ordained." In ch. xxiv. 15 he expresses a hope that there "will be a resurrection of both righteous and unrighteous."

Similar thought and phraseology are found in James v. 7-9: "Be patient, brethren, till the *coming* (*parousia*) of the Lord . . . because the *coming* of the Lord has come near . . . the Judge stands before the door." The phraseology and thought of Paul are found also in 1 Peter i. 5, "salvation ready to be revealed at the last time;" and in vv. 7, 13, "in the revelation of Jesus Christ." So again in ch. iv. 5-7, "who will give account to Him that is ready to judge living men and dead. . . . The end of all things has come near." And v. 13: "that, at the revelation of His glory, ye may rejoice with exceeding joy." Also ch. v. 1, "a sharer of the glory

about to be revealed ; ” and v. 4, “ when the chief Shepherd is manifested, ye shall receive the unfading crown of glory.” These passages prove that the thought and phraseology of Paul were shared by the Galilean apostles.

The harmonious testimony of these various and different witnesses affords complete proof, apart from any special authority of the Bible, that Jesus of Nazareth announced that He will return visibly from heaven to earth to close the present order of things and to pronounce and execute judgment on all men good and bad ; that He taught that at His coming evil will be prevalent on earth, and that, consequently, to some men His appearance will bring sudden destruction, but to the righteous deliverance and eternal blessing. The exact time of His return, Christ did not specify. But He spoke words which, with or without design, evoked in the hearts of some of His disciples a hope that some men then living would survive His coming. Paul, however, taught that the day of the Lord was not at hand, and that before Christ comes some new and terrible form of evil will first appear. That Christ left in the minds of some of His disciples this hope of an early return, and that He actually and conspicuously taught that He will come to close the present order of things and to judge all men living and dead, must be accepted, on reliable documentary evidence, as an assured result of New Testament scholarship.

LECTURE VI

THE FOURTH GOSPEL

WE turn now to a document which a confident and unanimous tradition of the early Christians, reaching back far into the second century, attributes to an intimate associate of Christ. This important external evidence receives strong support from its contents. The whole evidence gives, in my view, reasonable certainty that we owe to the apostle John the picture of Christ and account of His teaching found in the Fourth Gospel.

A very important statement of Christ about His return to judge the world is found in John v. 25-29.

We have here, with stately repetition, two parallel assertions marked by conspicuous points of similarity and difference. The former is introduced by an emphatic formula peculiar to, and very frequent in, the Fourth Gospel, "Verily, verily, I say to you." The latter assertion is designed to remove astonishment caused by the former: "marvel not at this, because, etc." Each assertion contains the solemn phrase, "there comes an hour;" found also in ch. iv. 21, 23, referring to the Gospel dispensation now close at hand, in ch. xvi. 2, referring to the future

persecution of the servants of Christ, in *v.* 25, referring to the fuller manifestation of Christ to His disciples, and in *v.* 32, referring to the dispersal of the disciples at the arrest of Christ. In the former of the two parallel assertions now before us, as in John iv. 23, our Lord adds, “and now is;” but in the second assertion these words are conspicuously absent. This difference marks an important distinction. Verse 25 describes the immediate effect of the preaching of Christ and the apostles: *vv.* 28 and 29 refer to an event future even to us. In *v.* 24 Christ has already said that they who hear His word and believe in God who sent Him “have passed out of death into life.” In the Gospel they have heard “the voice of the Son of God;” and it has given them “life.” Their life is an outflow of the life which “the Father has in Himself,” and which He has given to be in the Son. And, by raising into new life those who hear His voice and them only, the Son performs an act of “judgment.” The solemn words, “an hour comes and now is,” call attention to a new and important era in the spiritual life of men, created by the Gospel of Christ.

The astonishment evoked by the announcement of the gift of life to those who hear His voice, Christ removes, or rather supersedes, by a still more astonishing announcement touching another “hour” which also “comes.” Not only do the spiritually dead “now” hear the voice of Christ and rise into new life, but “an hour comes” in the future when

"all that are in the graves will hear His voice and will go forth." No such universal statement as this is found in *v.* 25: for not "*all*," even of those to whom it is preached, will listen to, and receive life from, the Gospel. On the other hand, we are not told that all who are in the graves, though all will hear the resurrection voice, "*will live*." All "*will go forth*" from their graves, some to "*life*," others to "*judgment*." This distinction is important, and is maintained throughout the New Testament. Although the word *life* is frequently used indiscriminately for bodily life of all kinds on earth, beyond the grave it is always reserved for a holy and blessed existence with God. Consequently, our Lord could not say that all who are in the graves "*will live*," even though all will leave their graves. For not all who do so will escape from death. "*A resurrection of life*" is the privilege only of "*those who have done the good things*."

In this great passage Christ puts in close juxtaposition two very different resurrections, each ushered in by His own voice, a spiritual resurrection in which those who accept the Gospel enter at once into spiritual life, and a resurrection at the last day when all the bodies of men laid in the grave will go forth, to life or to judgment, according to their works.

In close agreement with the above, we read in John vi. 39, and again with emphatic repetition in *vv.* 40, 44, that "*at the last day*" Christ will raise those who now believe in Him and who thus

have already eternal life. The same hope finds expression, from the lips of Martha, in ch. xi. 24. This mention of "the last day" carries forward the resurrection of the just to the close of the present order of things. It is in close agreement with the mention by Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 52, of the last trumpet."

The coming of Christ at the end of the age is mentioned in John xxi. 22, "if I will that he remain till I come," in language similar to that of the Synoptic Gospels and of Paul. That this was taken to mean "that that disciple does not die," implies that the apostles understood the coming of Christ here mentioned to be the close of the present order of things, not the spiritual coming mentioned in John xiv. 18.

Up to this point we have found complete agreement, in the matter before us, between the various writers of the New Testament and the various types of thought therein embodied. Paul teaches that at a voice from heaven the dead servants of Christ will rise, that all men will stand before Him in judgment, and that He will change the bodies of the just into the likeness of His own glorified body. The Synoptic Gospels represent Christ as teaching frequently that He will come from heaven with power and splendour and sit in judgment on the righteous and the wicked. And, in one great passage, Christ asserts that at His voice all the dead will rise and will receive according to their works.

Other teachiug different from, yet closely related

to, and in full harmony with, the above meets us in the discourses of Christ to the apostles on the night of His betrayal. He says, as recorded in John xiv. 18-20, "I will not leave you orphans; I *come* to you. Yet a little while and the world beholds Me no more, but ye behold Me: because I live, also ye will live. In that day ye will know that I am in My Father and ye in Me and I in you." Similarly, in ch. xvi. 16, "A little while and no longer ye behold Me, and again a little while and ye will see Me." Also *vv.* 22, 23: "Ye now have sorrow, but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice . . . and in that day ye shall ask Me nothing;" and *v.* 26, "in that day ye will ask in My name."

These words, in their full sense, refer evidently to the gift of the Spirit promised so conspicuously in chs. xiv. 16, 17, xvi. 13-15, immediately before the words quoted above. And they were abundantly fulfilled in the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. On that day and in that Spirit Christ entered into a fellowship with His disciples far closer than that which they had enjoyed during His life on earth; and in this real and important sense He returned to them after the separation caused by His death. We have here an inward and spiritual coming of Christ. And, inasmuch as this closer union was conditioned by the resurrection of Christ, we may speak of the bodily return of the risen Lord to the disciples, from whom He had been snatched by death, as the beginning of this spiritual return. In other words, the fulfilment of the promise before us began

in Christ's appearance to His disciples on the day of His resurrection; and was completed in the gift of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. To this latter refers probably the phrase "in that day." This spiritual return was a real anticipation of the bodily return for which His disciples were eagerly waiting.

In 1 John ii. 18 we read, "It is the last hour: and as ye have heard that Antichrist comes, even now are many antichrists arisen; whence we know that it is the last hour." The absence of the article twice, *ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν*, indicates that the present time is marked by the characteristics of "a last hour." The Christian dispensation, which in one sense is the beginning of a new and glorious era of eternal life, in another aspect is the last portion of the present order of things. The use of the word "hour" to describe so long a period of time warns us not to press its use elsewhere as indicating a short period. But we notice that the Gospel dispensation, however long, is in a measure homogeneous. During the whole of it, amid various developments, God is governing the world in the same method. The words "Antichrist comes" recall the teaching of Paul in 2 Thess. ii. 8: and the statement that "even now are many antichrists arisen" is in close agreement with v. 7, "the mystery of iniquity already works."

The scantiness of the teaching of the Fourth Gospel about the Second Coming of Christ, as compared with that of the Synoptic Gospels, stands related to the scantiness of such teaching in the

second and third groups of the Epistles of Paul as compared with the first group. In each case, the development of church life and thought absorbed the writers' attention for other topics. But though somewhat scanty, the teaching of the Fourth Gospel is in complete harmony with that of Paul and of the Synoptic Gospels.

LECTURE VII

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

WE turn now to a book differing widely, in thought and expression, from all else in the New Testament and occupying there a position something like that of the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament.

A tradition reaching back to the middle of the second century attributes the Book of Revelation to the apostle John. So Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* ch. lxxxi. : "A teacher of ours, whose name was John, one of the twelve apostles of Christ, foretold in a revelation which was made to him that those who believe in our Christ should pass a thousand years in Jerusalem, and that afterwards there should be a universal and, in a word, eternal resurrection of all men together, and then the judgment." On the other hand, wide differences both in phraseology and in modes of thought make very difficult, in spite of subtle links of connection, the supposition that both documents are from the same pen. To harmonise this conflicting external and internal evidence, lies beyond the scope of this volume. The quotation given above proves

the very early date of the Book of Revelation. And this early date, taken in connection with its contents, gives to it special value in our present research.

In Rev. i. 7, in close agreement with Dan. vii. 13, we read, "Behold, He comes with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, and they who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will wail before Him." Similarly in chs. iii. 11, xxii. 20 Christ says, "I come quickly;" adding in the latter passage, "and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." These are plain references to the return of Christ to judge the world.

In ch. ii. 5 we read, "but if not, I will come to thee and will remove thy lampstand out of its place, except thou repent." Similarly v. 16, "repent; but if not, I come to thee quickly, and I will fight with thee with the sword of My mouth." Also ch. iii. 3, "if thou do not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou wilt not know at what hour I will come to thee." These passages refer evidently to punishment inflicted, not at one definite moment at the close of the present order of things, but during the course of history. They thus stand related to the use of the term "day of the Lord" by the prophets of the Old Covenant to describe any conspicuous national punishment.

The word *quickly* (*ταχύ*) is found also, with conspicuous repetition, in Rev. iii. 11, xxii. 7, 12, 20: "I come quickly." The same thought finds expression in the introductory words in ch. i. 1, which are

repeated word for word in ch. xxii. 6 : "to show to His servants things which must needs take place *quickly* :" $\epsilon\nu\tau\acute{a}\chi\epsilon i$. Also ch. i. 3 : "the season is near." This conspicuous element of the Book of Revelation stands related to Matt. x. 23, xvi. 28, Jas. v. 9, 1 Pet. iv. 7, 1 John. ii. 18, etc.; all which assert or suggest an early return of Christ, and thus reveal an expectation not justified, in the form in which it was held, by subsequent events. This unfulfilled expectation presents a difficulty which I cannot remove. But it must not be allowed to invalidate the plain and abundant and harmonious teaching of the rest of the New Testament.

The first four seals, in Rev. vi. 1-8, open to us what seem to be consecutive historical pictures. At the fifth seal, in vv. 9-11, we pass within the veil and hear impatient voices of the souls of the martyrs. The sixth seal opens to us a vision of the dissolution of nature, and we hear the cry of the lost, who tell us that "the great day of anger is come." This can be no other than a picture of the final judgment. It is followed in ch. vii. by a vision of the sealed ones, led about by the Lamb as their shepherd, when "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." At the seventh seal (ch. viii. 1) there is silence in heaven, marking a pause in the series of visions; and we see seven angels with seven trumpets.

With the trumpets begins another series of apparently consecutive visions. But this second series as a whole seems not to follow, but to run parallel

with, the first series. For the total dissolution of nature under the sixth seal cannot be followed by the partial destruction described as occurring under the first four trumpets. The second series, like the first, leads up to the great consummation. For at the seventh trumpet (Rev. xi. 15) we hear an announcement, "The kingdom of the world has become our Lord's and His Anointed's; and He shall reign for ever and ever." In ch. xiv. 14 we have a vision recalling that of Dan. vii. 13: "And I saw and beheld a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like a Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown and in His hand a sharp sickle." In ch. xvi. we have a third series, of bowls, evidently, like the seven trumpets, parallel to the seven seals and leading up to the great consummation. The consummation of judgment is delineated in chs. xvii. and xviii., where we have, in vivid picture, the destruction of a great hostile power, followed in ch. xix. 1-8 by the Hallelujahs of the saved.

From ch. xix. 11 to ch. xxi. 8 we have a series of visions, each introduced by the phrase "and I saw," in ch. xix. 11, 17, 19, xx. 1, 4, 11, xxi. 1; followed in ch. xxi. 9-27 and ch. xxii. 1-5 by visions of the heavenly Jerusalem and of the River of Life shown to the prophet by an angel. All these visions seem to be consecutive: and they lead up to the final glory.

The first vision, in ch. xix. 11-16, takes us back into the conflict, and shows us One seated on a white horse and leading forth to battle the armies

of heaven. Before His advance fall the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire. The easiest explanation is that this picture delineates the struggle and victory and progress of the Gospel of Christ.

In ch. xx. 1, opens another vision, a sequel to those in ch. xix. 11-21. An angel descends from heaven, binds the serpent, and casts him into the abyss for a thousand years; after which long space of time he must needs be liberated for "a little time." The prophet adds, "and I saw thrones, and persons sat upon them, and judgment was given to them." He saw also "the souls of those who were beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God." It is not certain whether the words following, "such as did not worship the beast, neither his image," are a further description of the martyrs or describe another class of persons in addition to, or wider than, them, whom the prophet also saw, viz. the faithful servants of Christ. In the absence of decisive evidence, it is perhaps better to accept this latter wider interpretation. We are told that the persons referred to "lived," i.e. were alive when the prophet saw their souls, though some of them had been beheaded and all were undoubtedly dead; and that they "reigned with Christ a thousand years." But this does not imply that they began to live at the beginning of the thousand years; any more than it implies that they ceased to live and reign at its close. Satan was bound for a thousand years and then loosed; and during the whole of this time the prophet saw the

souls of the martyrs and perhaps of other faithful servants of Christ living and reigning with their Lord. The thousand years note an extension, but not necessarily a limitation, of time.

"The rest of the dead did not live :" i.e. they had not, as the martyrs had, a higher life which survived the death of the body. The words following, "until the thousand years were completed," do not assert or suggest that at the close of this long period they came to life. The assertion is purely negative. During the whole thousand years, while the servants of Christ lived and reigned with Him, the rest of mankind continued in a state of death. But we are not told either that they came to life, or that the saints ceased to live and reign, at the end of this period.

Verses 5b, 6 are a comment upon, and reveal the real significance of, the statement in *v. 4*. The words, "This is the First Resurrection," stand in marked contrast to "the Second Death;" and suggest a later resurrection, which is described in *vv. 12, 13*. This collocation of thought recalls John *v. 25-29*, already expounded, where two resurrections are similarly placed side by side. The life enjoyed by the saints reigning with Christ may well be described as a resurrection : for they were once "dead by reason of sins" and have been raised by the voice of Christ (John *v. 25*, Eph. *ii. 5, 6*) into new life. And, in contrast to the resurrection of the body "at the last day," it may correctly be called "the First Resurrection." They who experience

this earlier and spiritual resurrection are “blessed and holy:” for to them the resurrection of the body will be a “resurrection of life,” and they will thus escape “the Second Death.”

The place in which the saints will live and reign with Christ is not mentioned. Nothing is said here about their reigning on the earth; and the statement in Rev. v. 10, “they reign upon the earth,” has no reference to the millennium. Christ now sits at the right hand of God: and, in the absence of other indication, we may assume that the “souls” of the martyrs, whom the prophet saw, reign with Him in heaven. Of their bodily resurrection and return to the earth, there is, in the passage before us, no hint.

In *v.* 7 we read, “when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be loosed from his prison, and will go forth to deceive the nations.” Then follows the great apostasy. A vast multitude are gathered together to besiege the holy city: but fire fell from heaven and consumed them; and the Devil was cast into the lake of fire where were already the wild beast and the false prophet.

Then follows, in words recalling Dan. vii. 10, Matt. xxv. 31-46, the dissolution of nature and the final judgment: “And I saw a great white throne and Him sitting upon it, from whose face fled the earth and the heaven and place was not found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened, and another book was opened which is the Book of Life;

and the dead were judged from the things written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead in them; and they were judged each according to their works." We have here indisputably the judgment of all men, good and bad, at the close of the present order of things; already described in similar language by Paul, and by Christ as His words are recorded both in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Fourth Gospel.

If, as we have just seen, Rev. xx. 11-15 is a description of the final judgment, the apostasy described in vv. 8-10 is in close harmony with the teaching of Christ in Luke xvii. 26-30, where He compares His own second coming with the Flood and with the destruction of Sodom; and in still closer agreement with 2 Thess. ii. 3-12, where Paul teaches that the *parousia* of Christ will be preceded by the revelation and *parousia* of a new and terrible form of evil. Compare especially Rev. xx. 8, "he shall go forth to deceive the nations," with 2 Thess. ii. 9-11, "whose *coming* is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. . . . For this cause God sends them a working of error that they may believe a lie." In other words, the various writers of the New Testament agree to teach that Christ at His coming will find the world in deep sin; and that, to many who expect Him not, His coming will be sudden destruction.

The peculiarity of the passage before us is that it interposes between the time of writing and the

final apostasy a period of a thousand years during which Satan is bound, while the martyrs and probably other dead servants of Christ live, and reign with Him; and that their life is described as the First Resurrection. This binding of Satan for a limited though long time, followed by liberation and renewed activity, is an element not found elsewhere throughout the entire Bible. This being the case, it must be interpreted with utmost caution, and in the light of whatever teaching in the Bible most nearly approaches it.

The splendid visions of the prophets, e.g. the concluding chapters of the Book of Isaiah, do not help us much: for in them we have no hint of subsequent apostasy, and for the more part the language used excludes the possibility of apostasy. The nearest parallel, in the prophets, to the passage before us, is to be found in Ezek. xxxvii.-xxxix. The vision opens in a valley of dry bones. At the voice of the prophet, breath entered into them, and the dead woke up into new life. This is explained to be a prophecy of national revival. And with the revived nation God makes a covenant of peace. Then comes an onslaught of distant Gentile nations led by "Gog, of the land of Magog." From this tremendous attack Israel is rescued by fire from heaven, and Gog and his multitude suffer complete destruction. Lastly follows a picture of the restored temple and worship and of Israel dwelling safely in its own land. The closeness of the parallel leaves little room for doubt that these chapters of Ezekiel were before the mind

of the writer of the Book of Revelation. Unfortunately, they shed little light on the passage before us. But, that a national revival is depicted as a waking up of dead bones into life, is in complete harmony with the spiritual meaning given above to "the First Resurrection."

The nearest and most instructive parallel is found in John v. 25-29, already expounded. For we have here two distinct resurrections, one present and spiritual, the other future and bodily, the one partial and the other universal. Similarly, in Eph. ii. 5, 6, Col. ii. 12, iii. 1, Paul speaks of some who had been "dead" in consequence of their sins as already made alive and raised to sit with Christ in heavenly places. This teaching of Paul and of the Fourth Gospel contains all that is implied in the phraseology of Rev. xx. 4, 6. For, certainly, those who have heard "the voice of the Son of God," and have thus "passed out of death into life," and whom God has "made alive with Christ" and "made to sit in the heavenly places in Christ," have experienced what may be called, in contrast to the final consummation, "the First Resurrection." And, over those who have thus been "raised with Christ," indisputably "the second death has no authority."

Of the binding of Satan for a long but limited time, to be again liberated for a short time, I can give no explanation fully satisfactory. But the binding must be a limitation, by supernatural power, of the activity of the great enemy of God and man. It follows the final overthrow of other hostile

powers. But we have no indication that it will take place visibly before the eyes of men; or that it will interfere with the ordinary course of nature, as will the judgment described in Rev. xx. 11. Still less have we proof that the binding of Satan will banish evil from the earth. Had this been so, for so long a time, he would not, on his return, have so quickly roused the nations to rebellion. The passage is most easily explained as announcing that the earlier victories of the Gospel will be followed by a removal, through an extraordinary manifestation of divine power, of the hindrances which the god of this world has been permitted to put in the way of its further progress.

The above exposition is all that is demanded and justified by the grammatical meaning of the words used in Rev. xx. 1-10. And it permits us to understand in its natural grammatical meaning the abundant and harmonious teaching of the rest of the New Testament. To some, it will seem to fall below the full meaning of the strong words used in the passage before us. But to these words we cannot give a stronger meaning without doing violence to much more abundant and plain teaching elsewhere.

If this exposition be correct, we may look upon the progress of the Gospel during the last eighteen centuries as a victorious war carried on by Christ against the powers of evil which resist the advance of His Kingdom; and we may expect still further progress. We may expect that the great forces

which still oppose the work of God will be broken, and that the power for evil of the great spiritual enemy will be conspicuously limited for a long period. During this long period of spiritual peace and progress on earth, they who in loyalty to Christ have laid down their lives, and all who after faithful service have passed away from earth, are living and reigning with Christ within the veil, enjoying already a life which is an anticipation of their final reward. Strange to say, this long period of peace and progress will be followed, in the mysterious purpose or permission of God, by a liberation of the evil powers which for a long time have been bound; and by a consequent wide-spread revolt against God and His faithful ones. But this last uprising of evil will be short. The supernatural power which has already given to the Gospel its earlier victories will be again still more conspicuously put forth, and the power of evil will be broken for ever. Then follows the great assize, the punishment of the wicked, and the New Earth and Heaven in which the saved will dwell with Christ.

This exposition conflicts somewhat with a suggestion on p. 17 and in Note C touching the present state of the departed. But the great difficulty which surrounds the millennium forbids us to accept this as evidence against that suggestion. It rather warns us against confidence in the details of our theories touching the future.

From the above it is evident that the writer of the Book of Revelation accepts to the full the

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harmonious teaching of the rest of the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the present order of things; and adds to it an announcement of a preliminary victory over the great enemy, difficult to harmonise with the rest of the New Testament.

LECTURE VIII

MILLENNARIANISM

IN the foregoing lectures, by comparison of the various types of primitive eschatological teaching embodied in the New Testament, we have found complete historical proof that the early followers of Christ were looking forward to a definite moment when, unexpectedly, suddenly, audibly, and visibly Christ will return in bodily form from heaven to earth, to wake up the dead, to change the living servants of Christ, to judge all men, and to bring in the everlasting glory. In this confident and definite expectation, we found complete agreement between the Epistles of Paul, the Synoptic Gospels, the Fourth Gospel, and the Catholic Epistles. The same expectation finds expression also in the Book of Revelation. These various writers also teach that, at the coming of Christ, evil will be in power. And Paul teaches expressly that the appearance of Christ will be preceded by appearance of a new and terrible form of evil, an outward and conspicuous manifestation of evil influences already more or less secretly operating upon men; and that this evil power will be brought to nought by the brightness of the

appearance of Christ. The Book of Revelation, however, differs from all the rest of the Bible by depicting, before the last apostasy, an earlier and overwhelming defeat of the hostile powers, lasting in its effects for a thousand years. In other words, the Book of Revelation teaches two interpositions of divine power, each overturning, one for a time, the other finally, the enemies of God and man. The relation of these two victories of good over evil to the Second Coming of Christ so frequently announced in the New Testament demands now further inquiry.

In Lect. vii. we interpreted the vision of Christ on "a great white throne," depicted in Rev. xx. 11, as identical with the sudden and audible and visible and bodily return of Christ so frequently announced in the other books of the New Testament and indeed in Rev. i. 7, xxii. 12, 20. In opposition to this interpretation, the school of thought commonly known as MILLENNARIAN identifies the coming of Christ for which the early Christians were waiting with the vision of Christ on a white horse depicted in Rev. xix. 11. The question thus raised must be answered by a comparison of the two visions and of the events following them with the harmonious teaching of the rest of the New Testament.

The very close similarity in thought and phrase between Rev. xx. 11-15 and Matt. xxv. 31-46 at once attracts attention. In each account, Christ sits upon a throne, and all mankind stand before Him and are judged by Him according to their works. In

exact agreement with these passages is John v. 28, 29, where at the bidding of Christ all the dead leave their graves and go forth to life or to judgment according as they have done things good or bad. Very similar also is 2 Thess. i. 6-10, where we read that Christ at His revelation from heaven will give relief to His servants but eternal destruction to those who obey not the Gospel. This similarity is a strong presumption that these four passages refer to the same solemn event.

On the other hand, the vision of Christ in Rev. xix. 11-16 and the events portrayed in *vv.* 17-21 present not nearly so many points of coincidence with the teaching of the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ. For nowhere else is Christ's coming represented as that of a soldier armed for fight; nor is the destruction which follows His coming represented as a military overthrow. He comes, not as a soldier for the fight, but as a judge supported by irresistible power.

The vision of the throne and of Him from whose face fled both earth and heaven is in complete harmony with the suddenness of the coming of Christ as asserted in 1 Cor. xv. 52, "in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet," and as implied in the comparison with the flash of lightning in Matt. xxiv. 27, and with a thief in *v.* 43 and in 1 Thess. v. 4. But this idea of suddenness is quite alien to the picture in Rev. xix. 11-21 of a hero going forth to fight followed by an army, of a summons to the birds to come and eat the bodies

of those who will be slain, and of hostile armies prepared for war.

This close similarity of the one passage, and dissimilarity of the other, to the teaching of the rest of the New Testament affords strong support to the exposition given in my last lecture, and is a serious objection to the Millennial theory.

This preliminary judgment is confirmed by insuperable difficulties involved in the supposition that the coming of Christ for which the early Christians were waiting will be followed by the Millennium and Apostasy described in Rev. xx. 1-9. This will appear if we pursue this supposition to its consequences, taking into our account the indisputable teaching of other parts of the New Testament.

We must conceive the world going on in its usual course, and evil in great power. In a moment, as we have already learnt, a voice from heaven is heard, and Christ appears. At that voice, and to meet their appearing Lord, the murdered servants of Christ wake up from the sleep of death. But not these only. For we cannot conceive this marked honour given only to those who have actually shed their blood for Christ when so many others, e.g. Wycliffe and Luther, were equally faithful and equally ready to die for Him. If there be, before the Millennium, a bodily resurrection, it must be shared by all the faithful and departed servants of Christ. And along with these risen ones, we must conceive, according to the plain teaching of

1 Cor. xv. 52, 1 Thess. iv. 16, that the righteous then living will be changed and caught up to meet Christ. What about the living children of living believers? Infants, we may suppose, will be caught up with their parents. But what about those in their teens? Surely there will be a selection, the good ones taken and the bad ones left behind along with those who, not being servants of Christ, will have no part in the resurrection which will immediately follow the voice and appearance of Christ.

What becomes of the adult unsaved ones? Are we to suppose that they will continue on earth, eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, in successive generations? And what will be the moral state of mankind when the salt of the earth and the light of the world are removed? It might be thought that it will become a pandemonium. We must however remember that at the beginning of the Millennium the prince of darkness has been bound. But unfortunately there are no servants of Christ left on earth to take advantage of this removal of the great enemy of God and man and to preach to the wicked a Gospel of repentance. And of any general turning to God we have no hint in Rev. xx. 1-6, the only passage in the whole Bible which speaks about the Millennium.

Let us now try to follow, on the supposition before us, the risen servants of Christ. Their bodily resurrection, and such is expressly mentioned in 1 Cor. xv. 23, 35, 44, as following at once the coming of Christ, implies a definite place. Where

are they? Not on earth. For this is still occupied by the unsaved, who were not caught up to meet Christ. And we cannot conceive mingled together on the same planet some who have yet to die and others who have passed through death and will die no more. Such confusion of the present age with the age to come is in the last degree unlikely. If not on earth, are we to suppose them to be somewhere between earth and heaven, visible to the wicked still living and dying on earth? This suggestion would so completely change the conditions of human probationary life on earth as to make its continuance utterly incomprehensible. Or are we to suppose that the risen ones and the changed survivors will suddenly vanish from earth into the unseen world, in some such way as the ascending body of Christ vanished from His disciples' view? In this case, the Second Coming of Christ would be a voice and appearance of Christ from heaven, heard and seen (Rev. i. 7) by all men, yet followed by His disappearance and the disappearance of all the good people then living on earth. Of such disappearance of Christ after His return, we have no hint in the New Testament; and it contradicts the whole tenor of its teaching on this subject.

Touching the condition of the world during the Millennium, the supposition we are considering leaves us in utter perplexity. The naughty children of pious and living parents have been left to the mercy of a race from which all the righteous have been taken away. Satan is bound. But, unless the

risen ones are sent to proclaim the Gospel to the unsaved, there are none to teach them. The only favourable information we have about the world is that at the close of the Millennium it contains (Rev. xx. 9) "a camp of the saints."

After a long period, described as "a thousand years," during which Satan is bound, he is liberated, and returns to the earth. He is welcomed by a host as numerous "as the sand of the sea," who follow him to make war against the people of God. This quick and great apostasy proves that the Millennium is no triumphant and universal reign of righteousness. And it disproves the supposition that during the thousand years Christ is reigning visibly on earth. For we cannot conceive such revolt in His visible presence; nor can we conceive that at the release of Satan Christ will retreat, even for a short time, from the realm over which He has reigned so long. In any case, the triumph of Satan is short. Fire falls suddenly from heaven, a great throne appears, the books are opened, and all men, good and bad, are judged according to their works.

The above difficulties and contradictions are serious objections to the hypothesis which involves them.

The theory of a pre-millennial advent of Christ lies open to other insuperable objections. Our Lord asserts clearly in Matt. xxiv. 29, Mark xiii. 24, 25, that at His return the sun and moon will cease to shine and the stars fall from heaven. This implies a dissolution of nature. A still more graphic picture

of this dissolution is given in Rev. vi. 12-17, as heralding the great day of the anger of God. Scarcely less graphic is the picture given in Rev. xx. 11, "from whose face fled the earth and the heaven, and place was not found for them." Now the dissolution of nature described in this last passage evidently follows the Millennium. For it is impossible to separate the vision in Rev. xx. 11 from the apostasy immediately preceding it; and this is said expressly in *v.* 7 to follow the Millennium. In other words, the Book of Revelation announces a dissolution of nature following the Millennium. Our Lord announced, as we have seen, a similar dissolution to accompany His Second Coming. If, then, this coming precedes the Millennium, there will be two dissolutions of nature, separated by more than a thousand years; and, between these two catastrophes, a tremendous assault by a great multitude of followers of Satan against the servants of God.

Still further difficulties surround the theory before us. In Matt. xxv. 31-46 we read, "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit upon the throne of His glory, and there will be gathered together before Him all the nations, and He will separate them one from another as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." Our Lord concludes by announcing that those on His left hand "will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." Indisputably, the words, "when the Son of Man

comes," refer to that one definite coming of which Christ spoke so much. This is placed beyond doubt by the complete harmony of all that Christ says about this great event, which was ever in His thoughts. If, then, Christ's return is to be followed by the Millennium described in Rev. xx. 1-6, we must suppose that after this solemn separation the goats will again break in upon the sheep with the terrible assault depicted in *v.* 9 as following the Millennium. This is inconceivable.

Other difficulties remain. Our Lord announces in John v. 28, 29 that "an hour comes in which all that are in the graves will hear His voice and will go forth, they that have done the good things to a resurrection of life, and they that have done the evil things to a resurrection of judgment." This announcement is in close accord with Rev. xx. 13-15, where we read, "The sea gave up the dead in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead in them; and they were judged, each according to their works. . . . And if any one was not found written in the Book of Life, he was cast into the lake of fire." Each of these passages suggests irresistibly one universal resurrection and judgment. The theory we are discussing requires us to believe that there will be, in addition to the spiritual resurrection referred to in John v. 25, Eph. ii. 6, within the "hour" of which Christ speaks, two bodily resurrections separated by more than a thousand years, one of the righteous only, the other of righteous and wicked.

One more objection here demands notice. In John vi. 39, 40, 44, Christ announces that He will raise His people "on the last day." The same hope is expressed by Martha in ch. xi. 24. It is altogether incongruous to include in "the last day" events so dissimilar as the resurrection of the righteous, the thousand years' bondage of Satan, his release, the assault of Gog and Magog and its overthrow, and the final judgment. Similarly, in 1 Cor. xv. 52, Paul speaks of the voice which will awake the dead servants of Christ, and change the living, including himself and his readers, as "the last trumpet." Now, if the righteous are to be raised before the Millennium, and the wicked after it, there will be two resurrections; and, since the wicked are to be summoned to judgment by the voice of Christ, this voice must be the last trumpet, and the earlier voice, which will summon those to whom Paul refers in 1 Cor. xv. 52, cannot be so described. It will be not "the last trumpet," but perhaps the last but one.

Such are the many insuperable difficulties surrounding the hypothesis of a pre-millennial advent of Christ. It breaks up the one definite coming for which His disciples were waiting into two comings separated by more than a thousand years, each heralded by a trumpet voice and followed by a resurrection of the dead and a dissolution of nature. The period between these two comings and trumpets and resurrections is left in inextricable confusion, and concludes with a tremendous assault of the evil against the good.

We now ask, What evidence can be brought in favour of the hypothesis before us, to set against the above insuperable objections? No direct evidence. For throughout the New Testament we find no hint of two bodily coming of Christ and of two bodily resurrections, which are essential elements of the Millennial theory. Only one argument in its support seems to me worthy of consideration.

The most serious, and the only serious, objections to the interpretation here advocated are that throughout the New Testament, outside Rev. xx. 1-10, we have no hint of a long period of spiritual prosperity preceding the coming of Christ; and that such long period of prosperity is inconsistent with the hope of an early return of Christ cherished by some of His early followers. The absence of any trace of the Millennium between the confusion described in Matt. xxiv. 21-28 and *vv.* 29-31 is certainly remarkable. Still more so is the absence of any reference to it in 2 Thess. ii. 1-12, where Paul is warning his readers that the day of Christ is not at hand by saying that, before Christ comes, the Man of Sin must first come. It may not unfairly be argued that, had he known of a long period of blessing before the coming of Christ, he would have mentioned it as another proof that the day of Christ was not near. The various indications, noted on pp. 42, 52, 72, of expectation of an early return of Christ are also inconsistent with expectation of a millennium of blessing before the coming of Christ.

To this serious objection, I have no complete answer. But it seems to me much less serious than is the insuperable difficulty, or impossibility, of placing the final apostasy, which is to follow the Millennium, after the judgment described in Matt. xxv. 31-46, John v. 28, 29. Moreover, this objection is based only on ten verses, Rev. xx. 1-10, of the most obscure book of the New Testament. It seems to me safer to interpret this one passage in the light of the harmonious teaching of the rest of the New Testament than to throw into confusion the teaching of the entire New Testament in deference to this one passage. In other words, every theory of the Second Coming of Christ lies open to objection. But it seems to me that the pre-millennial theory is open to objections much more serious than any which can be brought against that propounded in this book.

That an earlier resurrection of the righteous is not asserted or suggested in 1 Thess. iv. 16, 1 Cor. xv. 23, I have already proved in Lect. iv. That the vision of Christ on a white horse, and "the First Resurrection," do not necessarily involve a visible interruption of the course of nature, I have shown in Lect. vii. These cannot therefore be brought as serious objections to the interpretation here advocated.

Such is the scanty evidence on which rests the unlikely supposition of two Last Trumpets, of two Comings of Christ, of two bodily Resurrections, and of two Dissolutions of Nature. In other words, we

are asked to modify and transform the abundant, and various, and harmonious teaching of the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ in deference to an exposition of a few verses of the most mysterious and difficult book in the Bible. Even if this exposition were indisputable, we might fairly ask whether it is safe to throw into confusion, for such a reason, the plain teaching of the rest of the New Testament. But the exposition which is made to bear the burden of issues so great is far from certain, or rather, is in itself improbable; and, as we have seen, another exposition involving no such confusion is at once suggested by the plain meaning of the words used in the passage in question.

It is no part of my present task to explain as a whole the imagery of the very difficult Book of Revelation. But, indisputably, many of its pictures must have a purely spiritual meaning, i.e. they must depict conditions and events which exist and take place only in the spiritual world, apart from any visible disturbance of the course of external nature. As examples, I must quote the first five seals in Rev. vi. 1-11. On the other hand, the sixth seal, in *vv.* 12-17, evidently breaks through the veil and describes, in such symbolic form as men on earth can understand, events which will visibly set aside the ordinary course of nature. This intermingling of the unseen and the seen, often without indication of the transition, warns us to use special caution in expounding the pictures of this mysterious book.

The only safe rule is to interpret the pictures in the light of the plain teaching of the rest of the New Testament. The theory before us reverses this method, and sets aside the plain meaning of plain statements in deference to an interpretation of one series of difficult metaphors.

The pictures of Christ coming on a white horse, of the angel in the sun calling the birds to feast on the victims about to be slain, of the wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies marching to battle, of the angel with a chain binding Satan, have very little in common with the metaphors used to describe the coming of Christ to judgment. And they certainly cannot be interpreted literally. They are therefore a very unsafe foundation on which to build an important doctrine. Moreover, we have no hint that "the souls" of the martyrs who lived and reigned with Christ had experienced a bodily resurrection. In Rev. vi. 9-11 we have another vision of martyred "souls" who are bidden to wait until their brethren, like themselves, have been slain. These impatient souls cannot have entered into the consummation involved in the resurrection of the body. Moreover, that in John v. 25-29 we read of two resurrections in close juxtaposition, one spiritual and the other bodily, and that Paul taught frequently that believers are already risen with Christ, warns us not hastily to assume that "the First Resurrection" must necessarily be a resurrection of the body. In short, the exposition upon which is built the doctrine of the

pre-millennial advent of Christ has no foundation in sound exegesis of the New Testament. It may therefore be dismissed as having no place in the Gospel of Christ.

The doctrine I have endeavoured to overturn owes its acceptance by not a few sincere and earnest Christians to a natural rebound from another doctrine still further removed from the teaching of the New Testament, yet prevalent in some circles of religious activity. The doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, which moulded the entire thought of His early followers, has been practically ignored by many modern Christians. An indefinite idea has silently grown up among them that the departed servants of Christ go at death to their full and final reward, and that the Gospel will make progress among men until, by its instrumentality, the whole world and all human hearts are brought to bow in unreserved homage to Christ. These doctrines leave no place for His bodily return to earth. For His dead servants have already attained their full consummation, and the whole purpose of God touching His Kingdom among men will be accomplished in the ordinary course of the Gospel of Christ. They who hold this view say little or nothing about the Second Coming of Christ. It lies outside their spiritual horizon. That which to the early Christians was so much, is nothing to them. Against this oversight of so large an element of the teaching of the New Testament, the doctrine which in this lecture I have combated is an extreme revolt. And many

sympathise with the revolt because they know enough of the New Testament to condemn the loose theology just mentioned. Unfortunately, by taking up a theory which breaks down under the weight of its own absurdity, they do something indirectly to strengthen the belief which they reject. The only safe remedy is to reinstate, by careful exegesis, the actual teaching of the New Testament.

This loose popular teaching has some important elements of truth overlooked by the Millennarians. The New Testament does not teach the conversion of the world by the Gospel. But Christ bade His disciples preach it to all nations: Matt. xxiv. 14, xxviii. 19, Mark xvi. 15, Acts i. 8. In 2 Thess. iii. 1 Paul begs his readers to pray that the Gospel "may run and be glorified." He announces in Rom. xi. 25f that all Israel will be saved along with the fulness of the Gentiles. On the meaning of all this, the history of the Christian centuries has shed welcome light. The leaven hidden in the meal has slowly and silently changed the whole: Matt. xiii. 33. And further progress is clearly in view, even during the present order of things. For this further progress, the servants of Christ are toiling, and must continue so to do, with all resources at their disposal, assured that their toil will not be in vain. But the clear and abundant teaching of the New Testament warns us that beyond this further progress, in the foresight of God, is the great and final apostasy and revolt, and that this will be put down, not by the ordinary means which have led forward the kingdom of God to its

present position, but by a supernatural appearance of Christ.

Such earlier prophecies as those in Isa. xi. 9, lxvi. 22-24, must be interpreted of the final glory: for after such blessing we cannot conceive another apostasy. They are a very uncertain support for the theory of the conversion of the whole world by the preaching of the Gospel.

Closely connected with the doctrine of the pre-millennial Advent is the question of the time of Christ's return. Most of its advocates expect an early return, almost at any hour. Such early return, they who reject this doctrine cannot expect. For, whatever they may think about the Millennium, to them Paul's warning to the Thessalonican Christians, that the day of the Lord was not close at hand, is still valid. He taught plainly, in 2 Thess. ii. 3-12, that Christ will not come until first have come a new and terrible form of evil. In his day, all this was quite consistent with an expectation that Christ might return during the lifetime of men then living. For so rapid had been the recent development of the Kingdom of God that a single lifetime seemed sufficient for the appearance of the Man of Sin, and for his destruction by the visible return of Christ. Such rapid development, we cannot expect now. During eighteen centuries no new form of evil has appeared, nothing which can for a moment be identified with the great enemy about whom Paul wrote. And the analogy of these centuries makes an early

and sudden appearance most unlikely. Moreover the present age, and those preceding it, have been times of spiritual progress; and the spiritual forces at work for good in the world bear no marks of exhaustion. We cannot conceive that this progress, wrought by God through ordinary instruments, will be interrupted by the hand of God. The time of Christ's return must be one of spiritual stagnation and retrogression. Consequently, assured as we are that a moment will come when unexpectedly Christ will lay His hand upon the wheels of time and stop them for ever, and sweep away the platform on which they have revolved so long, and build upon its ruins a New Earth and Heaven, we cannot expect this longed-for consummation in our own lifetime. Weary as we are with happy toil, we cannot doubt that we shall lay us down for our last sleep in His arms till the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.

For a notice of a modern defence of *Millennarianism*, see Note D. For another theory about the Second Coming of Christ, see Note E; and for another theory of the Millennium, see Note F.

LECTURE IX

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COMING OF CHRIST

THE practical agreement of the various and very different writers of the New Testament is, apart from any special infallibility or authority of the Bible, complete historical proof that the Founder of Christianity left upon the minds of His immediate followers a firm conviction that in visible form He will return from heaven to earth to close the present order of things, to raise the dead, to judge all men, and to bring in the everlasting glory. Now it is in the last degree unlikely that in this important matter all the early followers of Christ, the men who won for Him the homage of all future generations and through whose agency He became the Saviour of the world, were in serious error touching the teaching of their Master. The unlikeliness of this alternative compels us to believe that the unanimous conviction of His followers was a correct re-echo of the actual teaching of Christ. And whatever He announced, we cannot doubt that He will perform.

At this point a warning is needful. That the

doctrine which we have now traced to the lips of Christ pertains to the future, demands, in our interpretation of it, the utmost caution. The fulfilment, in Christ and Christianity, of the ancient prophecies given to Israel differs greatly both from the expectations aroused and from the letter of the prophecies. Doubtless it will be so in the Second Coming of Christ. All we can expect with confidence is that, in the latter as in the former, the realisation will, in all real worth, surpass the letter of the promise. Touching the return of Christ, we expect such fulfilment as might be most suitably foretold to men in the form we find in the New Testament.

Evidently the Apostles and Evangelists expected that the spirits of the dead will robe themselves again in material forms, although apparently in forms not subject to the conditions of animal life. Such seems to have been, as they conceived it, the body of the Risen Lord which they saw taken up into heaven. We therefore infer that they expected, not only a visible, but a bodily, return of Christ. And certainly they expected that His return will completely transform the material universe. This expectation is not set aside by our ignorance of the essential nature of matter. For, indisputably, under the contrast of *spirit* and *body*, which is co-extensive with rational life on earth, lies, even though we cannot precisely define it, objective reality. The New Testament teaching implies that this duality will have its place in the final con-

summation. This plain and abundant teaching cannot be set aside except by very decisive evidence: and such evidence we have not. See Lect. xix.

We now ask, What bearing has the teaching which in this volume we have traced to the lips of Christ upon the spiritual life of our own day? Is it to us merely a matter of antiquarian interest, or is it, or may it be, amid the progress of modern thought, helpful to the spiritual life of the servants of Christ?

It may be at once admitted that the doctrine before us cannot occupy in our thought the place it filled in the minds of the first generation of Christians. Indeed, it does not occupy in the longer and more mature epistles of Paul the position it holds in his two earliest letters. In the systematic exposition of the Gospel given in the Epistle to the Romans, it receives only slight mention, and has no place in the main argument. So also in the sublime Epistle to the Ephesians. In the Fourth Gospel, which contains the fullest development in the New Testament of the doctrine of the Son of God, it is not conspicuous. Important as it is, the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ cannot be placed on a level, as a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, with the superhuman dignity of Christ, His resurrection from the dead, the pardon of sins through faith in Him and through His death for the sins of men, and the gift of the Holy Spirit to be, in the servants of Christ, the inward source of a new life. It is, however, an integral part, in the second rank of importance, of the Gospel of Christ.

In our search for the reality underlying this teaching, we may learn something from 2 Thess. i. 7, and 1 Cor. i. 7, where the return for which His followers were waiting is described as "the revelation (or unveiling) of the Lord Jesus." In other words, the veil which now hides from mortal view the eternal realities will in that day be raised or rent. In this rent veil we have a definite conception of the Coming of Christ. It will be a bursting in, upon the visible universe, of the great Invisible beyond and above it, in order that the Invisible may transform and glorify the visible.

This expectation of a bursting in of the Unseen implies, and is the strongest conceivable expression of, a conviction that behind and beyond and above the visible universe is a greater world unseen. Upon this conviction rests the Christian hope and all religious life.

On every side we see a universe of apparently unlimited extent. And it seems to be as durable as it is firm and broad. Indeed the planets in their orbits and the so-called fixed stars in their scarcely perceptible movements seem to be a visible embodiment of eternity itself. In contrast to the solid earth on which we tread, with firm but passing steps, and to the starry heavens above our heads, we seem to be butterflies of a summer or like leaves of the forest opening in the bright green springtime only to pass away in the decay of autumn.

To assert, as is implied in the teaching of the New Testament, that an hour will strike in which

the visible universe, whose age reaches back through unnumbered millenniums, will pass away, is to assert the existence of something greater and older and more durable than the solid earth, on which so many generations of men have lived and died, and all that belongs to it; and of forces or a Power controlling the natural forces which seem to control irresistibly all human life. In other words, a belief in the Second Coming of Christ is the strongest possible contradiction to the Materialism which asserts or suggests that the things which are seen and the forces observed operating in them are the only matters certainly known to man.

The teaching of Christ that the visible universe will not abide for ever has received remarkable confirmation in our own day from Natural Science. All modern research teaches that the material universe is tending towards a state in which life will be impossible, that the forces of nature are carrying it irresistibly forward to the silence of death. In this, as in other respects, the life of an individual is an epitome of the life of the race, and of the world.

Beyond that silence and quiescence, Natural Science can see nothing. Herbert Spencer timidly suggests (*First Principles* pp. 529-537) that possibly the forces which are destroying the universe will, by some reverse action, bring it back to life. But, for this suggestion, he has no proof or presumption to bring. It is a mere hope for which Science finds no foundation, suggested as a disguise to hide the eternal night which is all that Natural Science can foretell.

Christ taught, not only that the present universe is passing away, but that, just as it has its source in an Unseen greater than itself, by which it is controlled, so it will be succeeded by another world far greater than that which we see around us, and destined to abide for ever. He taught that the solid earth beneath us is but a temporary platform for the passing drama of man's probation, and that when the drama is over the platform erected for it will be removed, to give place to the abiding reality for which that drama is the preparation. This teaching is the only explanation of the present material universe, apparently so durable yet manifestly doomed to pass away; and of human life upon it, apparently so transitory and yet of so much greater value than its material environment.

We now see that the Second Coming of Christ, as taught by Himself, is the strongest possible assertion that the material and visible, though apparently so important and so stable, are actually subordinate and transitory; and that the spiritual, apparently so intangible and transitory, is the enduring and the real. In no other form could this great truth, which underlies all religion and all the highest morality, have been so clearly and so forcefully stated as in the teaching which in these lectures we have traced to the lips of the Great Teacher who has remoulded for good the thought and life of man.

The return of Christ depicted in the New Testament will be a complete and abiding victory and dominion of mind over matter. In this life, matter

fetters mind in a thousand ways. The necessities of bodily life compel us to spend time in more or less degrading toil. Physical causes produce pain, and thus hinder mental effort. The intelligence of man is held down in its upward flight by its material environment. Now Paul teaches expressly, in 1 Cor. xv. 35, 44, that the risen servants of Christ will have bodies. This can only mean that at His return their disembodied spirits will again clothe themselves in material forms. But, whereas their present bodies are "psychical," or "animal," which I understand to mean that they are governed by the laws of animal life, their risen bodies will be "spiritual," i.e. controlled altogether by the intelligent spirit within. At present the noble element in man is fettered, and in large measure controlled, by the lower. The teaching of Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 44-46 asserts that this inversion is only transitory and preparatory, and that in the great consummation the element which is essentially higher will rule and that which is lower will receive its highest possible dignity by becoming the submissive organ of that which is greater than itself.

Still more conspicuously will the Coming of Christ be the absolute and eternal victory of good over evil. In the present order of things, not unfrequently evil seems to trample under foot the good. The wicked flourish, and for a long time. The righteous suffer, and sometimes lose life itself because they are good and others around are bad. But the majesty of the moral sense of man, which

speaks with an authority we cannot gainsay, assures us that this triumph cannot last. Indeed the moral incongruity of this occasional triumph demands a conspicuous and universally recognised vindication of the majesty of Right. All this prepares us to expect an exact and eternal retribution for all actions good and bad. Moreover, so closely interwoven in human action with its material environment, nearer and more remote, and so closely related is the imperfection of present retribution to its present imperfect environment, that we wonder not that the perfect retribution will be accompanied by a new and perfect material environment. Only in a New Earth and Heaven, and in bodies raised from the dead to die no more, will every one receive according as his work has been.

The resurrection of the body will be a complete and permanent realisation of the creative purpose of God. He made man spirit and body, in order that the spirit might rule the body and make it the organ of the spirit's self-manifestation, and in order that thus both spirit and body might attain their highest well-being. This purpose and this order were disturbed and for a time frustrated by sin. The body threw off the yoke of the spirit within; and, the original purpose being inverted, both spirit and body sank into discord and bondage. But, that He might restore the order thus disturbed, the Eternal Son, Himself the Archetype of all created intelligence, entered into human flesh and became Man. In those who receive Him, He at once rescues

the spirit, in some measure, from bondage to its material environment, nearer and more remote. But the rescue is only partial. Christ will come again to redeem even the bodies of His people, and, as Paul believed, (see Rom. viii. 19-23,) their further material environment, from the bondage of decay. He will thus, by restoring the normal relation of spirit to body and of man to his entire material environment, achieve the purpose for which man and the universe were created.

This victory of mind over matter and of good over evil, and this accomplishment of the creative purpose of God, can be brought about only by some such event as a resurrection of the dead and a renovation of the material universe. It cannot be accomplished by the hand of death. For death sunders that which God created to be closely interwoven. It is a victory of matter over mind, of evil over good. Lips which spoke for Christ are silent in the grave, silent in some cases because they spoke so bravely and so well. The fugitive spirits of His servants have been driven naked from the bodies and from the world in which once they served Him. This cannot be for ever. The fugitives must return and claim their own. The world must receive back those whom it once disowned. And all this can be done only by some such dissolution and renovation of nature and resurrection of the dead as is described in the New Testament.

The relation between our present and future bodies, and between the material universe around us now and

that new order of things which will abide for ever, is beyond our conception, and need not trouble us. For in our present bodies is a constant flux of particles; which however does not destroy or weaken their continuity. It matters not whether the risen and glorified bodies will, or will not, contain a single particle present in the bodies laid in the grave. The essential point is that the spirits driven forth by death from the material forms in which they lived and served God and from the visible universe will survive that universe and will robe themselves again in material forms. At the same time, a wide and deep analogy seems to suggest a real, though to us utterly inconceivable, continuity of relation between the present battlefield and the scene of the final triumph, and between the bodies once devoted on earth to the service of Christ and those on whose brows will rest the unfading crown.

The hope of a bodily resurrection and of a new earth and heaven gives dignity and worth to matter. For it implies that matter, be it what it may, is not a passing, but an abiding, companion of mind. And this abiding union is suggested irresistibly by the very intimate relation now existing. It is meet, as is suggested in Phil. iii. 21, that the bodies which have been obedient organs of the spirit should share its redemption and glory. But in what sense or measure this is possible, we know not.

That this victory of mind over matter, of good over evil, and this complete realisation of the purpose for which man was created, are connected

with Christ, and with His bodily return to earth, need not surprise us. For the incarnation of the Creator Son gave to matter a new and infinite dignity. Moreover, in that sacred human body evil achieved its most terrible victory over good, and matter inflicted on mind its deepest humiliation. In some measure that victory was reversed at the resurrection of Christ. He then triumphantly rescued from the grave the body which had been the victim of death's triumph. But the triumph of Christ was incomplete. The Creator had entered, in human form, a revolted province in order to bring it back to His peaceful and blessed sway. Without having done this, He returned from a world which had rejected Him. But He took with Him into the unseen world a handful of human dust; and placed it upon the throne of heaven. He thus severed that which was designed to be one; and took from the material universe its most highly honoured part.

Earth claims back that handful of dust; or rather the handful of dust claims the world of which once it was a part. The separation cannot be abiding. He who, after being driven from earth by man's deepest sin, returned into the body once nailed to the cross will return again, bringing back the handful of dust from heaven to earth, in order that its touch may raise earth to heaven.

Since the dead servants of Christ were on earth, and now are, in His nearer presence, vitally united to Him, we wonder not that their departed spirits will accompany their returning Lord. Since they

were created body and spirit, we wonder not that they, like their Lord ages ago, will robe themselves again in material forms. And since, both as Creator and Redeemer, Christ claims the homage and obedience of all His rational creatures, we wonder not that at His return He will sit in judgment on all men living and dead.

Thus in Christ and by His return from heaven to earth will be accomplished fully the purpose for which the world and man were created. Its orderly accomplishment was disturbed by sin; and this disturbance could be removed only by the suffering and death of the Incarnate Son, Himself the Agent of creation. A pledge of the accomplishment was given in the resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of the Crucified. His return to earth will bring the full realisation of the entire purpose of God.

The long waiting of the departed for their full reward need not perplex us. To the Unseen we cannot apply notions of time and delay derived from the present life. Suffice for us that the righteous dead are already resting with Christ from the toil and conflict of earth; and that in His good time they and we together shall enter the glory which in that day will be revealed.

For that day we wait. Not the death of the body, which is a penalty of sin and a victory of the powers of darkness, but the return of Christ in bodily form to reign over His faithful ones, their own bodies rescued from death and the grave, is

the aim and goal of our exultant hope. For that return His early followers eagerly waited. And their eager hope suggested that perhaps they might hear His voice and see His face without passing under the dark shadow of death. That expectation was not fulfilled. And we cannot share it. But, long as the time seems, that day will come. Had we witnessed the creation of matter, and known that long ages were predestined to elapse before rational man would stand on the earth, our expectation would have wearied at the long delay. But those long ages rolled by; and for thousands of years our planet has teemed with rational life. So will pass by whatever ages remain before our Lord's return. Many reasons suggest that, though not close at hand, it cannot be very long delayed. Doubtless we shall lay us down for our last sleep. But in our sleep we shall be with Him. And when the morning dawns we shall wake up in the splendour of the rising Sun.

YES, I COME QUICKLY.

AMEN. COME, LORD JESUS.

PART III

THE DOOM OF THE WICKED

LECTURE X

BEFORE CHRIST

THE one passage in the Old Testament bearing directly on this subject, from what is probably its latest book, is Dan. xii. 2: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to eternal life, and some to shame, to eternal *abhorrence*." This last Hebrew word is found in the Old Testament only in Isa. lxvi. 24, where we read that the "corpses" of the transgressors "shall be an *abhorrence* to all flesh." In this last passage, it can describe only the impression made by unconscious corpses on those who "shall go forth and look at" them. The same meaning gives good sense in Dan. xii. 2. The doom of the wicked, whether conscious or not, will evoke abhorrence in the minds of those who will inherit eternal life.

The meaning of the word rendered *eternal* will be discussed in Lect. xi., under its Greek equivalent. The Hebrew word seems to denote a long period

of time whose beginning or end lies hidden in the distant past or future. But, as we shall see under Matt. xxv. 46, its precise meaning has little bearing on the significance of the above passage. For in the memory of the saved, the effect of this vision of the lost will never cease.

For the definite and conspicuous teaching of Plato, see p. 5f.

The opinions prevalent among the Jews during the two centuries before Christ find abundant expression in the Book of Enoch: see p. 27. The following quotations are, in approximate chronological order, a good sample of the whole.

In ch. v. 4-6 we read: "But as for you, ye have not continued stedfast, and the Law of the Lord have ye not fulfilled but have transgressed it, and have slanderously spoken proud and hard words with your impure mouths against His greatness. O ye hard-hearted, ye will find no peace. 5. And therefore will ye execrate your days and be bereft of the years of your life: but the years of your destruction will be multiplied in eternal execration, and ye will find no mercy. 6. In those days ye shall give your name for an eternal execration unto all the righteous, and they will evermore execrate you as sinners—you together with (all other) sinners." Also in ch. xxii. 11: "Their souls are placed apart in this great pain, till the great day of judgment and punishment and torture of the revilers for ever, and vengeance for their souls, there will they be bound for ever."

The above were written probably not later than B.C. 170. Somewhat later probably is ch. xc. 24-26: "They were judged and found guilty and went to the place of condemnation, and they were cast into an abyss, full of fire and flaming, and full of pillars of fire. 25. And those seventy shepherds were judged and found guilty, and likewise cast into that fiery abyss. 26. And I saw at that time how a like abyss was opened in the midst of the earth, full of fire, and those blinded sheep were brought, and they were all judged and found guilty and cast into that fiery abyss, and they burned."

Still later, perhaps B.C. 134-94, in ch. c. 9 we read: "Woe to you, ye sinners; for on account of the words of your mouth and on account of the deeds of your hands which ye have godlessly wrought, ye will burn in a fire of blazing flame."

The following are probably from B.C. 100-50, ch. liv. 2-6: "And they brought the kings and the mighty and put them into this deep valley. 3. And then mine eyes saw how they made instruments for them, iron chains of immeasurable weight. 4. And I asked the angel of peace who was with me, saying: 'These chain instruments, for whom are they prepared?' 5. And he said unto me: 'These are prepared for the hosts of Azazel so that they may take them and cast them into the abyss of complete condemnation, and cover their jaws with rough stones as the Lord of Spirits commanded. 6. Michael, Gabriel, Rufael and Fanuel will take hold of them on that great day and cast them on that day into a

burning furnace, that the Lord of Spirits may take vengeance on them for their unrighteousness in becoming subject to Satan and leading astray those who dwell on the earth.'"

Again, in ch. lxix. 26-29: "And there was great joy amongst them, and they blessed and glorified and extolled because the name of the Son of Man was revealed to them: 27. And he sat on the throne of his glory, and the sum of judgment was committed to him, the Son of Man, and he caused the sinners and those who have led the world astray to pass away and be destroyed from off the face of the earth. 28. With chains shall they be bound, and in their assemblage-place of destruction shall they be imprisoned, and all their works vanish from the face of the earth. 29. And from henceforth there will be nothing that is corruptible; for the Son of Man has appeared and sits on the throne of his glory, and all evil will pass away before his face and depart; but the word of the Son of Man will be strong before the Lord of Spirits."

In Sirach vii. 17 we read, "the punishment of the ungodly is fire and worm." So Judith xvi. 17, written probably during the first century b.c.: "Woe to the nations that rise up against my race: the Lord Almighty will inflict on them just punishment in the day of judgment, to put fire and worms in their flesh; and they will wail, feeling the pain, for an age."

In Philo (about b.c. 25—A.D. 50) *On the Cherubim* § 1, we read; "He that has been cast out by God endures

the everlasting (*ἀἰδιον*) banishment: for, though it has been given to him who has not yet been completely captured by vice, and has repented, to return to virtue as to his native country from which he went into exile, on the other hand he who has been seized and overcome utterly as by an incurable disease must needs bear immortal (*ἀθάνατα*) calamities for the whole age, flung into the place of the ungodly, that he may endure unmitigated and continuous misfortune.”

Josephus (A.D. 37–101) in his *Antiq.* bk. xviii. 1³ says that the Pharisees held that those who have acted viciously in life “are detained in an *everlasting* (*ἀἰδιον*) prison.” So his bk. ii. 8¹⁴: “the souls of the wicked are punished with everlasting punishment:” *ἀϊδίῳ τιμωρίᾳ κολάζεσθαι*. The Essenes (Ibid § 11), like the Greeks, “allot to the wicked a dark and wintry cell, full of ceaseless punishments:” *τιμωριῶν ἀδιαλείπτων*.

The above extracts represent fairly, so far as we can trace, the opinions of thoughtful Jews about the future punishment of sin, at the time when Christ appeared. They reveal the great change which had passed over the thought of the nation since the times of the prophets. Of this coming change we have an indication, as noted on pp. 8, 25, in the Book of Daniel. The close similarity of the above teaching with that of Plato, and its absence from Jewish literature until the nation came under the influence of Greek thought, leave no room to doubt that it was derived from this source. Doubt-

less its spread among the Jews was helped by the moral considerations which led so many ancient nations to expect retribution beyond the grave, viz. the imperfection of retribution in the present life, viewed in the light of the inborn moral sense of man which commands righteousness and condemns sin with an authority we cannot dispute.

In the lectures following we shall find that this teaching, Greek and Jewish, was in part an anticipation of very definite and conspicuous teaching of Christ. In other words, in close harmony with the divine method, He built His higher and saving teaching on a foundation of rudimentary truths already laid in the thoughts and hearts of men, Jewish and Greek.

In spite of this similarity and apparent derivation, the above teaching sheds little or no light on that of the New Testament. Indeed the latter is much more definite and intelligible than the former. The teaching quoted above is of interest chiefly as a stepping-stone to the supreme teaching of Christ and His apostles. This last is our only reliable source of information touching the future punishment of sin. To this we now turn.

LECTURE XI

THE TEACHING OF PAUL. ETERNAL DESTRUCTION.

AFTER this preliminary survey of earlier teaching, I shall now reproduce, as accurately and fully as I can, the teaching of Christ and His apostles about the future punishment of sin, as preserved for us in the New Testament. In the first place, our investigation will be purely grammatical and exegetical. We will endeavour to learn what the writers of the New Testament actually taught and thought; noting different shades of teaching in different writers. We shall then discuss certain modern opinions on the subject before us. And lastly we shall review the whole in the light of whatever we know about the administration of the kingdom of God.

Our inquiry will begin with the epistles of Paul, as embodying the teaching of the best known and most influential of the apostles of Christ. These we will take in chronological order, except that in some measure we shall trace the more important words and phrases in their use and meaning throughout the epistles, and indeed throughout the New Testament. This will give us at times a broader view of its entire teaching. From the writings of

Paul we shall pass to the Fourth Gospel, to the Synoptic Gospels, then to other parts of the New Testament, and lastly to the Book of Revelation.

The above method will have the advantage of shedding light, not only upon the subject before us, but on its relative importance as compared with other doctrines of the Gospel of Christ.

In 1 Thess. i. 10 we read that "Jesus delivers us from the coming *wrath*," or *anger*; and in ch. ii. 16 that "*Anger* is come upon them to the end." The same word, commonly rendered *wrath*, but meaning simply *anger* of God or man, is frequently used by Paul to describe the future punishment of sin. In Rom. ii. 5 he says to an impenitent man, "Thou art treasuring for thyself *anger* in a day of *anger*." And we read in v. 8 that "for those who obey unrighteousness there will be *anger* and fury." In ch. v. 9 Paul hopes to be "saved from the *anger*;" and speaks in ch. ix. 22 of "vessels of *anger* prepared for destruction." Similar language in Eph. v. 6, Col. iii. 6: "Because of these things comes the *anger* of God."

From this conception of divine anger must be carefully removed all thought of vindictive emotion. In this, the righteous anger of a loving parent affords a human pattern of the divine. The anger of God is simply His detestation of, and determination to punish, sin.

In 2 Thess. i. 8 we find in the English Bible a still stronger word: "*vengeance* for them that know

not God." This rendering is unfortunate: for it suggests ideas which ought to have no place in a ruler. The Greek word (*ἐκδίκησις*) denotes only the just infliction of punishment.

In 1 Thess. v. 3 we read that in the day of the Lord there comes to the wicked "sudden *destruction*," from which "they shall in no wise escape." The word rendered *destruction*, *στρεψη*, meets us again in a passage quoted above, 2 Thess. i. 9, as a description of the just punishment awaiting those who know not God: "who will pay penalty, even eternal *destruction* from the presence (literally, the face) of the Lord, and from the glory of His might." (These last words may mean either that the destruction will proceed from the manifested *face* of Christ appearing to judge the world and from the splendour which will accompany the putting forth of His might, or that the destruction will remove the guilty from the benign presence of Christ and from the splendour with which His power will cover His people. Between these expositions, certain decision is impossible.) The same word is found in 1 Cor. v. 5, "for *destruction* of the flesh;" and in 1 Tim. vi. 9, where it is associated with a cognate word, *ἀπώλεια*, as a description of the doom of the wicked. This last Greek word is used in the same sense also in Matt. vii. 13, Rom. ix. 22, Phil. i. 28, iii. 19, Heb. x. 39, Rev. xvii. 8, 11. The cognate verb *ἀπόλλυμι* is used in the same sense in Matt. x. 28, 39, xvi. 25, xviii. 14, Mark i. 24, viii. 35, Luke ix. 24, xiii. 3, 5,

xvii. 33, John. iii. 16, vi. 39, x. 28, xii. 25, Rom. ii. 12, xiv. 15, 1 Cor. i. 18, viii. 11, xv. 18, 2 Cor. ii. 15, iv. 3, 2 Thess. ii. 10. In the active voice, it is translated *destroy*, as in Matt. ii. 13, x. 28; or *lose*, as in ch. xvi. 25: in the middle voice it is frequently rendered *perish*, as in 1 Cor. i. 18. The cognate substantive is rendered *destruction* in Matt. vii. 13, Rom. ix. 22; and *perdition* in Phil. i. 28, iii. 19. This frequent use of the word and its cognates in all four Gospels and by Paul proves that it was in the apostolic Churches a technical term to describe the future punishment of sin. As such, it demands our careful study.

The active form $\delta\lambda\nu\mu\iota$ is common in Homer and the tragic poets in the sense of *kill*. So in *Iliad* bk. viii. 498 Hector speaks, “I said that I would *destroy* both the ships and all the Achæans, and depart back again to windy Ilios.” So Æschylus, *Agamemnon* l. 1456: “One woman (Helen) who *destroyed* many, very many, souls before Troy.” So l. 1466. She caused the death of many Greeks. The same active form is often used by the same writers in the sense of *lose*. So in the *Odyssey* bk. xix. 274 we read that Ulysses “*lost* his dear companions and hollow ship;” i.e. they perished at sea. In the same way the Latin *perdere* unites the senses of *destroy* and *lose*. In the middle voice and in the second perfect $\delta\lambda\omega\lambda\alpha$, the Greek verb before us is frequently used in the sense of *perish* by death. So *Iliad* bk. iv. 451: “The shriek and the shout of men *destroying* and *being destroyed*.”

In the same sense we find frequently, especially in later Greek, the corresponding forms of the verb *ἀπόλλυμι*. So Xenophon, *Hellenics* bk. vii. 4¹³: "Many men and many weapons they *lost*, retreating through a rough country." The men were killed in battle. In both senses, viz. *to lose* and *to destroy* by death or otherwise, the word is very common.

In view of the frequent use of the word *δλλυμι* and its derivatives as synonyms of death, it is important to reproduce the current Greek conception of the state of the dead. This is made easy by bk. xi. of the *Odyssey*, which describes a visit of Ulysses to the realm of the dead, and his intercourse there with the souls of his dead acquaintances. All are conscious, all remember the things of earth, and some describe even the mode of their own death. But their existence is utterly worthless. Darkness and gloom overshadow the whole picture. Achilles (ll. 489-91) declares that the poorest lot on earth is better than that of the highest among the dead. We wonder not that such wretchedness is spoken of as *destruction*. For, according to Homer, the dead had *lost* everything worth having. Plato (see quotation on p. 6) describes the dead as still conscious. This implies that the words before us do not, when used to describe the dead, imply extinction. But, that some Greeks believed death to be extinction, see below, p. 126.

With the above uses of the word agrees a not uncommon use of the middle form *ἀπόλλυμαι*, especially in later Greek, in the sense of *ruin* of any kind.

So Dio Chrysostom speaks (Or. xxxi., p. 348c) of very immoral men as “those to the last degree ruined:” *τοῖς ἐσχάτως ἀπολωλόσι.* Plutarch (*On the Love of Riches* § 7) says of misers: “The children they think to educate they *ruin* (*ἀπολλύουσι*) and pervert, planting in them their own love of money.” The same writer (*Avoidance of Debts* § 8) represents Philoxenus as saying, in reference to the luxury at Syracuse, “These things shall not *destroy* (*ἀπολεῖ*) me, but I them.” And in the *Life of Mark Antony*, ch. lxvi., the same writer speaks of Cleopatra as “the woman who had already *ruined* him, and *would ruin* him yet more:” *τὴν ἀπολωλεκυῖαν ἥδη καὶ προσαπολοῦσαν αὐτόν.* Of earlier writers, Sophocles in his *Oedipus in Colonus* represents (l. 394) Ismené as saying to Oedipus, who had been smitten with a terrible calamity, “The gods lift thee now, but before they were *working thy ruin:*” *ἄλλυσαν.* Similarly, Euripides, *Medea* l. 78: “we are *lost* if we add a new evil to the old one.” In Homer’s *Odyssey* bk. x. 237-240, Circé turns men into swine, leaving their minds unchanged: and this calamity is in l. 250 called *destruction* as in 1 Thess. v. 3, 2 Thess. i. 9. Here indisputably destruction is not annihilation. See also quotations from Aristophanes and Euripides in Note L.

In the *Phædo* of Plato the middle voice of the same word is frequently used about the soul in the sense of its ceasing to be, of complete dissipation. But it is worthy of note that, when thus using the word, Plato is careful to define his own meaning.

So in the *Phædo* p. 70a we read: "In what relates to the soul men are apt to be incredulous; they fear that when she leaves the body she may be no longer anywhere, but that on the very day on which the man dies she may perish and *be destroyed* (*διαφθείρηται τε καὶ ἀπολλύηται*), immediately on her release from the body issuing forth dissolved like smoke or air, and in her flight vanishing away into nothingness." So p. 91d: "the soul herself *be destroyed*, and this be death, *destruction* of the soul:" *αὐτὴν ἀπολλύηται, καὶ ἡ αὐτὸν τοῦτο θάνατος, ψυχῆς ὅλεθρος.* And so frequently.

In the New Testament the simpler form *σλλυμι* is not found. But *ἀπόλλυμι* is very common in precisely the same senses as in classical Greek. In the active voice, it denotes to *destroy* or to *lose*; or rather it conveys the idea common to these two English words. The object *destroyed* or *lost* is put in the accusative. It is frequent in the middle voice, for that which is being destroyed; and in these cases is conveniently translated *perish*.

In the active voice, it is frequently used in the sense of *kill*. So Matt. ii. 13, "Herod will seek the child to *destroy* it;" and Mark iii. 6, "they took counsel, in order that they might *destroy* Him." So, in the middle voice, righteous Zechariah is said in Luke xi. 51 to "have-perished between the altar and the house;" and in ch. xiii. 33 Christ is recorded to have said that "it is impossible that a prophet *perish* outside Jerusalem." On the stormy sea, as we read in Matt. viii. 25, the disciples cried, "*we-are-perishing:*"

ἀπολλύμεθα. For they seemed to be sinking into the jaws of death. In Matt. ix. 17, broken wine-skins are said to *perish*: for they had received damage which made them useless.

Elsewhere the active voice must be rendered *lose*. In Luke xv. 4, 8, we have a man who *has-lost* a sheep, and a woman who *has-lost* a coin: ἀπολέσας. Yet neither sheep nor coin was injured: for they were afterwards *found*, to the joy of their owners. This proves that the word before us does not in itself imply actual injury to the object *lost*; and warns us to use utmost caution in rendering it by the English equivalent *destroy*. For no one would say that the *lost* coin or sheep was *destroyed*. Another contrast is the word *save*. So Matt. xvi. 25, Luke ix. 24: “whoever desires to *save* his life will *lose* it.”

This last passage reminds us that a man may (v. 25) “*lose* himself.” In this sense, as noted above, the middle voice is common; as it is for the more tremendous loss awaiting the wicked. Consequently, in different connections of thought, the same word may be both predicated and denied of the righteous dead. As quoted above, Zechariah *perished*; yet in 1 Cor. xv. 18 Paul denies that “they who have been laid to sleep in Christ *have-perished*.” From one point of view they lost all: in reality they lost nothing. “God gave His only begotten Son in order that every one who believes in Him may not *perish*, but may have eternal life:” John iii. 16.

A good example of the word is 2 Pet. iii. 6, where we read that the world, overwhelmed by water,

perished. It was not annihilated; and was afterwards restored. The word *perished* (*ἀπώλετο*) asserts only that the ruin caused by the Flood was complete.

In a similar sense we have the corresponding substantive. The myrrh poured on the head of Christ, as recorded in Matt. xxvi. 8, is spoken of by the disciples as *destruction*: *εἰς τι ἡ ἀπώλεια αὕτη*: “to what end this *waste*? ” For it was incapable of further use.

In exact agreement with the above is the use of the same family of words in the Septuagint. But the agreement makes quotation needless.

The various uses of the word are now before us. It does not denote annihilation. For the *lost* may be afterwards *found*; whereas annihilation involves a breach of continuity which excludes subsequent restoration. The old world was not annihilated at the Flood: but it was overwhelmed with complete ruin. Nor were the murdered prophets, nor the lost coin or the lost sheep, annihilated. In spite of the various renderings we are compelled to adopt, the word before us conveys always the same root idea. It denotes utter and hopeless *ruin*, the complete failure of the maker or owner’s purpose for the ruined object; whether it ceases to exist or continues a worthless existence. But sometimes the word looks at this ruin, not as it is in itself objectively, but only from the speaker’s own subjective and limited point of view.

The word is therefore appropriately used for the *lost* coin: for, although still existing somewhere

uninjured, the owner's purposes with regard to it were utterly thwarted, to her it was absolutely useless. So were the wine-skins in reference to their original purpose: for we must suppose them to have been injured beyond repair. The same word is appropriately used of Ulysses' companions and ship *lost* at sea: for to him they were virtually non-existent. So of the men turned into swine: for such metamorphosis was utter and awful ruin. It may be used as a familiar synonym of death, e.g. of the martyr Zechariah, even by those who look for a life beyond the grave; because, from the common point of view of bodily life on earth, death is utter ruin. Similarly, we speak even of good men as *lost* at sea, and of a man putting an end to his existence. It may be used, as we have seen in the quotations from Plutarch, for complete demoralisation, without thought of the death of the demoralised one. For demoralisation is utter ruin of all that which gives real worth to manhood. It may be used for the absolute extinction of consciousness. But in this case the kind of destruction referred to must be, as in the quotations from Plato, clearly indicated in the context. Taken by itself, the family of words denotes simply utter and hopeless ruin of any kind. It says nothing whatever about what becomes of the ruined object.

From the foregoing, we see that no one English rendering reproduces the full sense of the Greek word now before us. No one would say that the *lost* coin was *destroyed*. For it was afterwards *found*.

and even while lost was uninjured. On the other hand, we should scarcely say that at the deluge the antediluvian world was *lost*. The Greek word conveys the idea common to the English words *destroyed*, *perished*, and *lost*; and this only. It asserts nothing about what has become of the object *lost* or *destroyed* except that, from the point of view of the person who has lost it, it has been reduced to practical worthlessness.

This difference between the meanings of the Greek and English words illustrates the danger of learning the details of Theology from a translation of the New Testament; and especially the danger of building important doctrine on two or three passages of the English Bible. For no version reproduces accurately and fully the original. At the same time, the broad principles of the Gospel are taught so frequently and so clearly that a devout reader, using only a translation, may learn with perfect certainty all that is needful for confident and rational faith and hope. But beyond this he cannot safely go.

The common Greek word discussed above is used some thirty times by Paul and other New Testament writers to describe the punishment which, at the coming of Christ, will befall those who reject the Gospel. So we read in 1 Thess. v. 3: "when they say, Peace and safety, then comes upon them sudden *destruction*; . . . and they shall not escape." Similarly, 2 Thess. i. 9, "eternal *destruction*;" and Phil. iii. 19, "whose end is *destruction*."

In another connection these words might mean

unexpected and quick death. They cannot do so here. For, although death is the common lot of good and bad, Paul repudiates, in 1 Cor. xv. 18, the idea that the dead servants of Christ *have been destroyed*. Moreover the destruction threatened in 1 Thess. v. 3, 2 Thess. i. 9, Phil. iii. 19, must be much more than the common lot of all men. It can be no less than a supernatural infliction of utter and hopeless ruin. The word means, as we have just learnt, neither extinction of consciousness nor endless torment, but simply the loss of all that makes existence worth having. But either extinction or endless torment might properly be described as *destruction*: for each of these would be utter ruin.

This destruction is spoken of in the New Testament sometimes as having already taken place, at other times as now going on, and elsewhere as to be inflicted in the future. Our Lord implies in Matt. x. 6, xv. 24, that some "sheep of the house of Israel" were already "*lost*." For they had fallen so far that they could not possibly save themselves from utter ruin. But, as we read in Luke xix. 10, "the Son of Man came to seek and to save the *lost*." On the other hand, in 2 Thess. ii. 10, 2 Cor. iv. 3, we read of "those who are *being destroyed*" or "*lost*"; and in 1 Cor. i. 18, 2 Cor. ii. 15, these are placed in contrast to "those who are being saved." The present participles (*ἀπολλυμένοις . . . σωζομένοις*) represent salvation and destruction as processes now going on. They who are in "the way leading to life" (Matt. vii. 14) experience day by day the

operation of a power which keeps them safe from peril and is bringing them to the safety of heaven; whereas they who tread (*v.* 13) "the way leading to *destruction*" are day by day undergoing a process which will end in utter ruin. With equal appropriateness, from other points of view, the one class are in Eph. ii. 5 said to be already saved; yet of them Paul says in Rom. v. 9, 10, that they "will be saved," and in ch. xiii. 11 that their salvation is now nearer than when they believed. Similarly, in 1 Thess. v. 3, 2 Thess. i. 9, we read of destruction to be inflicted at the coming of Christ; and in Matt. x. 28 of "Him who is able to destroy soul and body in Gehenna." For only in the great day will the destruction which has already begun and is daily making progress receive its full consummation.

We have now seen that the term most frequently used by the various writers of the New Testament to describe the doom of the wicked denotes neither more nor less than utter *ruin*, the loss of all that gives worth to existence, without any suggestion whether the lost one has ceased to be or continues in a worthless existence. We seek further information touching this awful ruin.

In 2 Thess. i. 9 the *destruction* awaiting the wicked is further described by an all-important adjective: "They who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, shall pay penalty, viz. *eternal* (*aiōniov*) destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might."

The use and significance of this adjective demand now our best attention.

The meaning of the word *aiōn* is well given by Aristotle, *About Heaven* bk. i. 9: “The limit ($\tauὸ\; \tauέλος$) which embraces the time of each one’s life, outside of which there is nothing by nature, is called each one’s *aiōn*. In the same way the limit of the whole heaven, and the limit embracing the whole time and infinity, is *aiōn*, taking its name from *αἰ̄ ζεῖν*.” This double use is found in all Greek literature. In other words, *aiōn* means primarily a man’s *lifetime*, or human life in the aspect of time. It was then felt that there is a life longer than that of an individual, that the realm of things around has its time, and with lapse of time will or may pass away. But in all cases the idea of time is more or less conspicuous.

In these two closely related senses the same Greek word is used in the Septuagint as a very frequent rendering of a Hebrew word of similar significance. So in Ex. xxi. 6, Deut. xv. 17, in reference to a slave who refused to leave his master’s house, we read, “he shall serve him *for ever*,” i.e. *for life*: *eἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. Not unfrequently it denotes a long period whose beginning is lost in the dim distance of the past. So in Gen. vi. 4, in reference to men before the Flood, “The same were the mighty men which were *of old*:” *οἱ ἀπὸν αἰῶνος*. Also Isa. lxiii. 9, in reference to Israel in the wilderness, “He bare them, and carried them all the days *of old*,” or “the days *of eternity*:” *τὰς ἡμέρας τοῦ αἰῶνος*. In v. 11

the same Hebrew phrase is rendered *ἡμερῶν αἰωνίων*: “*eternal days.*” In Amos ix. 11 we find the phrase again: “I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days *of old.*” So Micah vii. 14. Of future time we read in Isa. xxxii. 14, “The hill and the watchtower shall be for dens for ever (*ἔως τοῦ αἰώνος*), a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks.” But, that this does not refer to endless desolation, is proved by the words following: “Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.” Yet, though not endless, the desolation was *agelasting*. God promised to David in 2 Sam. vii. 16: “Thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure *for ever* before thee: thy throne shall be established *for ever.*” In this last passage the same Hebrew phrase is rendered, first *ἔως αἰώνος*, and then *εἰς τὸν αἰώνα*. So Eccl. i. 4: “One generation goes, and another generation comes; and the earth abides *for ever:*” *εἰς τὸν αἰώνα*. Very emphatic is the use of a phrase similar to, but stronger than, this last in Dan. ii. 44: “The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which *for ever* shall not be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand *for ever:*” *εἰς τὸν αἰώνας*, twice.

In the New Testament we frequently meet the contrast of *this age* and *the coming age*. The former denotes the present order of things from the point of view of its duration; the latter points to a new

order of things which the coming of Christ will bring in. So Eph. i. 21: "not only *in this age*, but also in that which is to be." Also Luke xx. 34, 35: "the sons of *this age*; . . . they who have been counted worthy of *that age*." And 1 Cor. i. 20, ii. 6, 8: "the disputant, . . . the wisdom, . . . the rulers of *this age*." In a few passages the same word denotes past time. So John ix. 32: "*Since the world began* (*ἐκ τὸν αἰώνος*) it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind." And Acts iii. 21: "which God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been *since the world began*:" *ἀπ' αἰώνος*. Similarly ch. xv. 18. So in 1 Cor. ii. 7 we are told that *before the ages* (*πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων*), i.e. before the long periods known as ages began, God formed His all-wise purpose of salvation. It was therefore "*the purpose of the ages*:" Eph. iii. 11. But it was "*hidden from the ages*:" Eph. iii. 9, Col. i. 26.

Most frequently the word is used in reference to the future, especially in the phrase, already used by the Lxx., *for the age*, *eis τὸν αἰώνα*, e.g. John vi. 51, 58; and *for the ages*, as in Rom. i. 25, ix. 5; or in the superlative phrase *for the ages of the ages*, which we may understand to be ages whose moments are ages, i.e. reaching to the utmost limits of human thought, as in Gal. i. 5, 1 Pet. iv. 11.

Corresponding with the substantive *αἰών* is the adjective *αἰώνιος*. And with the latter as with the former the idea of duration is always associated. We naturally expect to find in the one the same

variety of meaning we have already found in the other. If so, we might render it in the one case *lifelong*, in the other *agelong* or *agelasting*, of time past or future; i.e. lasting as long as the man lives to whom it pertains, or as long as the order of things to which it belongs. It denotes always duration conterminous with the age which the speaker has in view.

In classical Greek the adjective is very rare. Plato in his *Laws* bk. x. p. 904a, speaks of soul and body as being indestructible, but not *eternal*: ἀνώλεθρον, . . . ἀλλ' οὐκ αἰώνιον. This suggests that the latter is the stronger word. In his *Republic* bk. ii. p. 363d, he says that some men "count the best reward of virtue to be *eternal revelry*." Also in his *Timæus* p. 37d the same word occurs twice, as does the corresponding substantive *aiōn*; in each case denoting indisputably long duration.

In the Septuagint the word occurs more than a hundred times, forty times as an alternative rendering of the same Hebrew word: cp. Isa. lxiii. 9, 11. To this version therefore we must look for its New Testament meaning. In Job xli. 4 God asks touching leviathan, "Will he make a covenant with thee, that thou shouldest take him for an *eternal* (i.e. a *life-long*) servant?" This corresponds with the common classical meaning of *aiōn*. In Psalm xxiv. 7, 9, it seems to describe the ancient gates of Jerusalem. In Psalm lxxvii. 5 we read, "I have considered the ancient days, and have remembered the years of old," or "*eternal* years:" ἐπη̄ *aiōnia*. Similarly in

Isa. lviii. 12 we read, “thy *agelasting* (*aiώνια*) ruins shall be built;” i.e. walls which for long ages had lain in ruins. So ch. lxi. 4: “they shall build *agelasting* ruins, they shall raise former desolations, and they shall repair waste cities, desolations of many generations.” These passages correspond with another use of *aiών*, viz. to describe a period beginning in the forgotten past. On the other hand, in Gen. ix. 16 God speaks of an *agelasting* covenant between Himself and Noah and the whole human race that there should not be another flood. It was *agelasting* inasmuch as it will last while the world lasts. Similarly, in Dan. iii. 33 (version of Theodotion, bound up with the Lxx.) Nebuchadnezzar says of God, “His Kingdom is an *eternal* Kingdom, and His authority for generation and generation.” So ch. iv. 31, vii. 14, 27. In all cases, the conspicuous idea is that of long duration, lost in the distant past or future.

Very important is the use of the word (forty-two times) in the Pentateuch. In Gen. xxi. 33 we have the “*eternal* God;” and in Ex. iii. 15 His “*eternal* name.” Elsewhere it refers to the future, denoting always a long time: e.g. in Gen. ix. 12, 16, for the rainbow; in chs. xvii. 7, 8, 13, xlvi. 4, for circumcision and for the possession of Canaan; and in Ex. xii. 14, 17, (24), xxvii. 21, xxviii. 39, xxx. 21, Lev. vi. 18, 22, x. 9, xvi. 29, xvii. 7, xxiii. 14, 21, 31, 41, xxiv. 3, Num. x. 8, xv. 15, xviii. 8, 11, 19, 23, xix. 10, 21, we read of “*eternal* statutes,” e.g. about the passover, oil for the sacred lamp, Aaron’s vestments, and other details of the Mosaic ritual. Thus the

word used twice to describe the endless existence of God is also used very frequently to describe Israel's possession of Canaan, which has long been in other hands, and the ordinances of the tabernacle, which have been finally superseded by the realities therein symbolised. This warns us that the word *eternal*, although denoting always long duration, does not in itself imply endless permanence. For, to the earliest readers of the New Testament, its meaning must have been determined by its frequent use in the Greek version of the Old Testament. Indeed, even when used of God, it does not mean *endless*; any more than the word *mighty* when applied to God, e.g. Jer. xxxii. 18, is equivalent to *almighty*. The same word *mighty* is appropriately used in the same sense both of God and (e.g. ch. ix. 23) of man. To give to the word *eternal*, in the above passages so familiar to the early Christians, the sense of *endless*, would assert, in flat contradiction to Paul, the endless permanence of the Mosaic ritual.

We now pass to the New Testament. In Rom. xvi. 25, 2 Tim. i. 9, Tit. i. 2, we read of "times *eternal*" during which the Gospel mystery was kept in silence, and "before" which grace and a promise of "life *eternal*" were given. This promise must have been made in time, not in eternity: and this is confirmed by the plural form *times*, which could not denote endless duration. Yet the same word in the same verse correctly describes both the historic ages gone by and the future *life* of the righteous: for both were *agelasting*: cp. Rom. xvi. 25, 26. This

is all that the word *eternal* means. In Jude 7 Sodom and Gomorrah are described as “undergoing punishment of *eternal* fire.” These words cannot denote a flame burning endlessly and causing endless torment. For the cities are said to “lie before us as an example,” which no suffering in the unseen world could be to men on earth. They depict the long ages during which the cities of the plain destroyed by fire had lain conspicuously desolate. The “*eternal* fire” denotes here, not endless flame causing endless torment, but agelasting desolation caused by flames which had long ago burnt themselves out. Conversely, in Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho* ch. 81, the words “*eternal* resurrection” describe, not an endless rising, but an agelasting result of the rising.

Elsewhere in the New Testament the word *eternal* refers to future blessing. We have “*eternal* life” in Rom. ii. 7, v. 21, vi. 22, 23, Gal. vi. 8, 1 Tim. i. 16, vi. 12, Tit. i. 2, iii. 7, etc. See Lect. xiii. Cp. 2 Cor. iv. 17, v. 1, 2 Tim. ii. 10, etc. Wherever used, both substantive and adjective, *aiōn* and *aiōnios*, denote long duration, the length being determined by the context.

That the word *eternal* is not equivalent to *endless*, is proved by a quotation from Irenæus in Lect. xiv. For, if equivalent, the second word would be empty tautology. The former word is taken from Matt. xxv. 46: the latter is added to remind us that “the good things from God” are both “eternal and endless.” See p. 189.

In view of this study of the meaning of the words *destruction* and *eternal*, we return to 2 Thess. i. 9, where, in a passage describing the doom of the lost, we read that they "will pay penalty, viz. eternal destruction." The adjective *eternal*, now added to the word *destruction* already used in 1 Thess. v. 3, suggests irresistibly that of the ruin here foretold the writer saw no end. On the other hand, these words make no assertion about the condition of the *lost*, i.e. whether they will continue in a worthless and wretched consciousness or sink into unconsciousness. For, as we saw on p. 128, the word *destruction* does not, in itself, denote extinction, but only the loss of all that gives worth to existence. Nor can we infer, from this use of the adjective *eternal* or *agelasting*, that the persons destroyed are themselves agelasting. For it describes, not the persons destroyed, but the destruction awaiting them. This last will be agelasting, even if the lost ones sink into unconsciousness. For its results will continue throughout the ages during which, but for their sin and rejection of salvation, they would have enjoyed infinite blessing in the presence of God. Consequently, these words make no assertion about the lost except that of their ruin the writer sees no end.

Other passages add to the gloom which surrounds the solemn passage before us. In Phil. iii. 19, touching certain "enemies of the cross," we read that their "end is destruction :" similarly, of certain ministers of Satan, we read in 2 Cor. xi. 15 that

their end shall be according to their works, evidently a bad end: cp. Heb. vi. 8, 1 Pet. iv. 17.

The word *τέλος* or *end* denotes the attainment of a goal, its full outworking of all inherent tendencies. This gives great force to Rom. vi. 21, 22, "the *end* (i.e. full outworking) of those things is death," or "eternal life." But this fuller meaning includes always the idea of finality: and sometimes this last idea is so conspicuous that the word means little more than cessation. So Luke i. 33 "of His Kingdom there will be no *end*," and Mark iii. 26; where the word denotes that an object has completed its course and then passed away. But, so far as I have noticed, it never leaves room for subsequent reversal.

Paul writes with tears, "whose *end* is *destruction*." But if for the ruined ones there were final restoration, even after long ages, these ages of darkness would roll by and give place to sunshine and life. That sunshine would know no sunset or cloud: and, as age succeeds age of increasing glory, the ages of darkness would dwindle into a dim and fading memory of a retreating past. Of such happy spirits, none could say that their *end* was *destruction*, or was "according to their (bad) works." To them, destruction would be, not an end, but a dark pathway into eternal light. The *end* of all men would be the same, viz. eternal life. In other words, if Paul had had any idea that all men will at last be saved, he could not have written what indisputably he has written. This compels us to believe that

he looked on the destruction of the wicked as final.

In Gal. vi. 8, 1 Cor. iii. 17, the doom of the lost is described as *corruption* (*φθορά*, *φθειρεῖ*), a synonym of destruction: see quotation from Plato on p. 126; also 1 Cor. xv. 33, 2 Cor. vii. 2, xi. 3, Eph. iv. 22, Col. ii. 22, 1 Tim. vi. 5, 2 Tim. iii. 8. In 1 Cor. xv. 42, 53, Acts xiii. 36, the word suggests the decay of a corpse: and in 1 Cor. ix. 25 the "corruptible crown" is a withering garland of leaves. This close synonym to the word *destruction* is additional proof that the fate of the lost presented itself to Paul chiefly as utter ruin, the loss of all that gives distinctive value to humanity. This is further confirmed in Rom. vi. 21, 23, viii. 13, where the doom of the lost is called *death*, suggesting a fate analogous to the ruin of bodily forms by death. So Eph. ii. 1, 5: "you being dead by reason of your trespasses." As contrasts, the reward of the righteous is in Rom. ii. 7, 1 Cor. ix. 25, xv. 42, 50-54, 2 Tim i. 10, 1 Pet. i. 4 called *incorruptibility*; and in Rom. ii. 7, v. 21, vi. 22, 23, Gal. vi. 8, 1 Tim. i. 16, vi. 12, Tit. i. 2, iii. 7, Acts xiii. 46, 48, it is called *eternal life*. This use of the words *death* and *life* will be further discussed in Lect. xiii.

In Rom. ii. 5 we find an impenitent man treasuring for himself anger in the day of judgment. This implies that he was daily increasing the punishment awaiting him. So, in 2 Cor. v. 10, the words "each receive the things done through the body" imply gradation of reward and punishment. All this

implies consciousness continuing beyond the great assize. For annihilation at the assize would be alike to all. Consequently, the fate of the lost was not, in Paul's view, immediate extinction. If not, it must be intense suffering. For the light of the great day will reveal to them the greatness of the salvation and blessing they have carelessly thrown away, and the infinite love they have shamefully trampled under foot. Agony more terrible than this retrospect, we cannot conceive. It is an inevitable inference from the plain teaching of Paul and other New Testament writers that Christ "will give back to each one according to his works."

Beyond his assertion of their utter ruin, and our inference that of this ruin they will be conscious, Paul teaches nothing about the state of the lost. He does not assert or suggest that they will ever sink into unconsciousness. For other objects said to be *destroyed* indisputably continue to exist, and some to think and speak: and we shall see, in Lect. xiii., that *life* is more than existence or consciousness, and that therefore loss of life does not necessarily involve loss of conscious existence. On the other hand, Paul does not teach or suggest the endless consciousness of those who will be destroyed; for he says nothing to exclude the possibility that, in the mercy of Him who gives sleep even to the wicked, their consciousness of ruin may ultimately sink into oblivion. But of this possible relief he gives no hint.

In this comparative reticence of the great apostle,

there is profound solemnity. Before his reluctant eye looms a vision of ruin. In that dark vision he cannot see a ray of light. He therefore, without attempting to mark out its limits, turns from it to greet the life eternal, the gift of God in Christ. See Note S.

The Epistle to the Hebrews does not add very much to the teaching of the epistles which bear the name of Paul. In Heb. vi. 2, among the first principles of Christ we find "eternal judgment." This is evidently condemnation to the eternal destruction spoken of by Paul. In *v.* 8 we have land "bringing forth thorns and thistles, whose end is to be burnt" (cp. Phil. iii. 19, 2 Cor. xi. 15). Similarly in Heb. x. 27 we read of "a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which will devour the adversaries." These two passages introduce an important element of teaching which will come before us more clearly in the Gospels, and which I shall discuss in Lect. xiv. In *v.* 29 we are warned against a "worse punishment," of which "they will be counted worthy who have trampled under foot the Son of God."

LECTURE XII

THE UNIVERSAL PURPOSE OF SALVATION

THE above teaching must now be supplemented and guarded by other passages which speak clearly of God's purpose of salvation as universal.

In 1 Cor. xv. 22 we read that "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." This categorical assertion, some expositors interpret as meaning that in consequence of their relation to Christ all the dead will come forth from their graves to judgment. But the words *life* and *alive*, although frequently used to describe the present bodily life of men and animals and (cp. 1 Cor. xv. 36) even of vegetables, are never once used in the Bible to describe the future state of the lost. When referring to existence beyond the grave, they are always, as in John v. 29, specific terms distinguishing the state of the saved from that of those who in the great day will be condemned. Now the passage we are discussing (1 Cor. xv. 22) takes us beyond the limits of bodily existence on earth. And in that loftier sphere, the life and incorruptibility brought to light through the Gospel give to the word *life* a new and loftier significance. This nobler use of a common

word is a conspicuous feature of the phraseology of the New Testament: and it must rule the significance of the passage before us. The lost will go forth from their graves not to life but (Rev. xx. 14, 15) to a second death.

Moreover, although Christ will call all men from their graves, it is utterly opposed to the thought and phrase of Paul to speak of men whom in Eph. ii. 12 he declares to be "without Christ" as being "made alive *in Christ*." This last phrase, so conspicuous a feature of the writings of Paul, describes ever an inward relation to Christ shared only by those who are inwardly united to Him and find in Him their spiritual home. These considerations compel us to understand the words "in Christ shall all be made alive" as referring to a blessed and glorious resurrection.

Other expositors, unable to give to the word *made-alive* any but a good meaning, and to the word *all* a wider and narrower scope in the same verse, have accepted this passage as a categorical assertion that all men will ultimately be saved. This interpretation makes Paul flatly contradict his own words in Phil. iii. 19, "whose end is destruction." And inasmuch as the whole chapter (1 Cor. xv.) refers specially, and apparently exclusively, to the resurrection on the day of Christ's return, this exposition would employ, or at least suggest, that on that day all men will enter into the enjoyment of life eternal; in absolute contradiction to 1 Thess. v. 3, 2 Thess. i. 9, John v. 29, and much other express teaching in the

New Testament. An interpretation involving such contradiction must not be accepted unless it be absolutely demanded by Paul's own words.

To these words, with the above interpretations in view, we will now turn. Paul has asserted in 1 Cor. xv. 18 that, if there be no uprising of dead men, then they who have been laid to sleep in Christ, i.e. His dead servants, have *perished*. As the word was expounded in Lect. xi., they have lost all that is worth having. And men who, like the apostle, have sacrificed everything for a hope in Christ are of all men most to be pitied. This suggestion he rejects with a triumphant assertion in v. 20 that "Christ is risen from the dead, a firstfruit of the sleeping ones." He refers evidently only to those mentioned in v. 18 as "laid to sleep in Christ." Now the word *firstfruit* suggests a harvest to follow. This suggestion, Paul supports by saying that, just "as through man came death, also through man comes resurrection of dead men." And this statement he confirms by a more definite assertion, "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ will all be made alive." Throughout the whole chapter the writer thinks only of the dead in Christ and of resurrection only as a gateway to life eternal. Indeed it contains emphatic and reiterated assertions which are true only of the saved. So, without any further limitation, still writing about "the resurrection of the dead," Paul says in v. 43, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruptibility; it is sown in dishonour it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is

raised in power." Whatever be the ultimate destiny of the lost, none can suppose that these words were intended to describe the lot awaiting them at the coming of Christ.

Now in all human discourse universal terms are limited by the speaker's mental horizon. Beyond that horizon, they have no validity to assert or deny. And in this chapter the unsaved lie altogether outside the writer's thought. Writing as a believer in Christ to fellow-believers, he thinks only of those who abide in Christ and will share His glory. He remembers that through the sin of Adam his readers, like himself, will pass through the dark portal of death; and remembers also that they who believe in Christ will live, though they die; that they owe this immortal life to the resurrection of Christ; and that it will be consummated in their own resurrection from the dead.

Notice carefully that in this passage Paul writes, not *πάντες ἀνθρώποι*, as in Rom. v. 12, 18, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 4, where he refers expressly to the whole race, but the less definite term *πάντες*, which leaves the precise reference to be supplied from the context. This confirms strongly the limited exposition given above. Similarly, in 2 Cor. v. 15, he writes that "one died on behalf of all:" an assertion true of the whole race. But the words which follow prove that the apostle refers only to those who have shared the blessed result of the death of Christ, and in this sense are dead with him: "One died for all, therefore all died." In each case, Paul's words, read in

the light of their context, have not the full compass they might have if they stood alone as an absolute assertion.

From the above it is now evident that the passage we have been discussing sheds no light on the future punishment of sin. It does not even assert a universal purpose of salvation. I have discussed it merely to guard against prevalent misinterpretations. It is, however, of great importance as containing, in a few plain words, the germ of teaching expounded more fully in another passage bearing much more closely on the matter before us, which now demands our attention.

In Rom. v. 18 we have again the definite phrase *πάντας ἀνθρώπους* in reference first to the sin of Adam, and then to the salvation brought by Christ. The same words are found also in v. 12, where we have a definite and emphatic assertion, “to *all men* death passed through.” This historical statement is expounded in v. 14: “death reigned from Adam to Moses.” Without doubt it covers the entire human race. Even over Enoch and Elijah, during their life on earth, death reigned, until by the hand of God they were rescued from its dominion. Here then we have a passage in which manifestly the writer’s horizon embraces the whole family of man.

We notice at once that v. 18, although consisting of two clauses by no means short, contains no verb. Consequently, the word which usually conveys the main assertion of the sentence must be supplied from the context. This defect sheds obscurity over the

whole verse, and renders needful most careful grammatical study of the words used.

The most conspicuous feature of this verse, occurring twice in each clause, is the common preposition *eis*. Upon our interpretation of this small word depends our exposition of the whole verse.

This preposition denotes, in its simplest meaning, motion towards the inside of something. It is thus more definite than *πρός* with an accusative, which denotes simply motion towards an object, it may be only towards its circumference. From this local sense is easily derived that of mental movement or direction. It is the ordinary Greek word to describe an intelligent purpose. And this is its most common derived sense. Less frequently it is used to describe a tendency, sometimes an unconscious outworking of blind force. At other times it notes an actual result, intentional or unintentional. These three senses are closely allied, and flow naturally from the radical local sense of the word. The first and third are found together in closest relation in Rom. vii. 10: "The command which was *for* life, this was found by me to be *for* death." The purpose of the law was life; its actual result to Paul was death. The context, and especially the contrast of life and death, make quite clear the different senses conveyed in this one short verse by the same common preposition.

When the word *eis* denotes a purpose, it may almost always be suitably rendered *for*, as in the above rendering of Rom. vii. 10. The Revisers'

usual rendering, *unto*, is obscure, and therefore unsatisfactory.

In the light of this various use of this common preposition, we turn again to Rom. v. 18. The absence of a verb compels us to fill up its defective grammatical structure from the preceding verses; and this is the more easy because v. 18 is expressly given as a summing up of the foregoing argument: “*Therefore as through*,” etc.

The earlier clause recalls at once v. 12, where we have the same words, *εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους*, evidently marking out the extent of the result of Adam’s sin: “to all men death passed through.” So v. 14: “death reigned from Adam to Moses.”

But we have no assertion that through Christ benefit has actually reached *all men*. Indeed the universal phrase, *εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους*, is conspicuous by its absence from vv. 15-17. The free gift has abounded, not for *all men*, but for *the many*: *εἰς τοὺς πολλούς*. These last words occur again still more conspicuously in v. 19, where we read that “*the many* will be constituted righteous.” This repeated change of expression cannot have been chosen merely in order to call attention to the great number of the saved; for this would be done more effectively by the universal phrase, *all men*. Another explanation of it must be sought. Moreover, in these two passages, the definite article, *οἱ πολλοί*, by no means implies or suggests universality, but marks out the many as a definite object of thought. The article suggests universality only when this is involved in

the definiteness of the object referred to. Similarly, in v. 17, we read, not that all men "will reign in life," but that this will be the lot of those who receive the gift of righteousness. In other words, where we have a plain statement of actual or expected result, the universal phrase, *all men*, is conspicuous by its absence. Only once do we find it in the second part of the comparison, and then in a passage (v. 18) in which we have no categorical statement.

The explanation is not far to seek. In defect of clear statement, we must fall back upon the most common use of the preposition *εἰς*, when not used in a strictly local sense. In v. 18 Paul wishes to say that the life eternal, which, as he taught in v. 17, will be actually enjoyed by some men, i.e. by "those that obtain the abundance of the grace and of the gift of righteousness," was designed *for all men*. We may render the verse, "therefore, as through one trespass (judgment came) for all men, for condemnation, so also through one decree of righteousness (a free gift came) for all men, for justification of life."

To this exposition no one can object that it gives to the same preposition in the same verse two meanings, viz. in the one case that of actual result and in the other that of design. In both cases, it denotes direction. As in Rom. vii. 10, so in this passage, the context indicates that in one clause the direction in view was that of actual result and in the other that of purpose. For indisputably

all men die. But Paul never says that all men will reign in life through Christ. The exact meaning and compass of the indefinite words used in this verse must be interpreted by the argument of which it is a summing up and by the writer's general teaching.

Nor can it be said that this exposition breaks down the comparison of Adam and Christ, that a contingent and partial benefit is no match for actual and universal injury. For this failure of the comparison is only apparent. Although death is inevitable and universal, continuance under its dominion depends upon ourselves. In Christ, God offers to every man an entrance into eternal life. Consequently, each man's fate is in his own hands. Indeed we gain in Christ much more than we lost in Adam. For, as we learn in *v. 16*, they who accept the offered life will be saved, not merely from the result of their father's first sin, but from the due punishment of their own "many offences."

We may therefore accept Rom. v. 18 as an assertion that the salvation brought into the world by Christ is as wide in its design as was the sin of Adam in its actual result; or, in other words, that God's purpose of salvation embraces the entire race. But we find in it no assertion that all men will actually be saved.

In Rom. xiv. 11 Paul quotes from Isa. xlvi. 23: "As I live, saith the Lord, to Me shall bow every knee, and every tongue shall confess to God." The prophet refers apparently to willing homage paid

by true servants of God. His words are most easily understood as referring to universal worship in that new earth and heaven which he saw from afar. But it would be unfair to interpret them as meaning that that glory will ultimately be shared by all the wicked men of the prophet's own day. Indeed the last words of the glowing prophecy in Isa. lxvi. 24 speak of the corpses of those who have sinned, of the worm which shall not die and the fire which shall not be quenched. These terrible words reveal how far from the writer's thought was a universal restoration.

This prophecy Paul quotes to support his assertion that "we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God;" and he rightly draws from it the inference, "therefore each of us will give account of himself to God." For this universal homage must be a fulfilment of a divine purpose; and this purpose implies that God claims the obedience of all men, and will therefore require an account from all.

We must therefore place Rom. xiv. 11 beside ch. v. 18, as announcing or implying that God's original purpose of salvation embraced every child of Adam. But, inasmuch as it is quoted by Paul, not in reference to the ultimate salvation of all men, but simply to prove that all men will give account to God for actions done on earth, we cannot accept it as an assertion of the ultimate salvation of all.

From Rom. xiv. 11 we turn naturally to Phil. ii. 9, 10, where, in language borrowed from the same prophecy, we have a plain statement of God's purpose

in raising the Crucified One above and beyond all others and giving to Him the Name beyond every name. As before, the graphic delineation "every knee bow and every tongue confess" must describe the willing homage of the servants of God. But here the worshippers are further described as belonging to three classes. "Those in heaven" are its angelic inhabitants: same word in Eph. i. 3, 20, ii. 6, iii. 10, vi. 12, 1 Cor. xv. 40, 48, 49. "Those on earth" are living men: same word in Phil. iii. 19, 1 Cor. xv. 40, 2 Cor. v. 1. "Those under the earth" are the dead in contrast to the living. So Homer (*Iliad* bk. ix. 457) speaks of Pluto as "Zeus under the earth." It is unsafe to infer from these last words that Paul thinks of universal worship earlier than the resurrection. His threefold division includes angels and men as they were at the moment of writing. And he divides men into those now living and those already dead. For both these classes will join in that eternal song. Without thought of time, looking only at the persons belonging to these three all-inclusive classes, Paul says that God exalted Christ in order that every one of them may bow to Him.

It is not safe to infer from the graphic terms "every knee and every tongue" that angels and departed spirits have bodily form. For these words were naturally prompted by the apostle's thoughts about living men; and with these he easily associated angels and the dead.

The phraseology of the verse before us is appro-

priately taken from Isa. xlvi. 23, already referred to, which follows and confirms an announcement of God's purpose of salvation for the Gentiles: "look to Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." And inasmuch as that ancient purpose will be fulfilled in homage paid to Christ, and only thus, the submission to God here foretold is legitimately described by Paul as submission to Christ. Notice also that the "glory of God the Father," i.e. the manifestation of His greatness evoking His creatures' admiration, is here represented as the ultimate purpose for which God exalted Christ. As ever, Paul rises from the Son to the Father. A close coincidence is found in 1 Cor. xv. 28.

From the mention in Phil. ii. 10 of "those under the earth" as objects of God's purpose of salvation, we cannot infer a probation in Hades, even for those who on earth did not hear the Gospel. For it is quite possible that of this large class the fate of each will be determined by his acceptance or rejection of such light as he had on earth; and, if so, the eternal song of the heathen who loved the truth will be a designed result of Christ's victory over death. The whole passage is so easily explained by Paul's teaching elsewhere that we cannot fairly infer from it any further teaching about the position or prospects of the dead.

With the passage just studied may be classed Col. i. 19, 20: "He was pleased that in Him should all the fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, . . . whether the things upon

the earth or the things in the heavens." And Eph. i. 9, 10: "According to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him . . . to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth." Thus in each of the longer epistles of the third group, written by Paul apparently from his prison at Rome, and embodying his loftiest and widest thought, we have a plain assertion that God's purpose of salvation embraced every individual man; but we have no assertion or hint that in every man that purpose will be accomplished. A similar, but less definite, purpose is asserted in 1 Cor. xv. 28: "that God may be all things in all."

Similar teaching is found in the latest group of the Pauline epistles. In 1 Tim. ii. 1-5 we have an exhortation that prayer be made for *all men*, among whom are specified kings and men in authority; and we are told that God "desires *all men* to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth." In ch. iv. 10 we read that God "is Saviour of *all men*, specially of believers." In Tit. ii. 11 the Revisers read "the grace of God bringing salvation to *all men*." But the words so rendered mean only salvation "for *all men*:" *σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις*. The Greek dative merely specifies those for whose benefit the saving grace appeared. In each of these passages we have the universal phrase noted above, *all men*. But the first and third of them state only a divine purpose, not necessarily an actual result. And if God's purpose of salvation embraced all, He may justly be called "Saviour of *all men*:" and, inasmuch as

only believers will actually be saved, He is in this special sense their Saviour.

One more passage demands attention here. In Rom. xi. 26 we have a categorical assertion that "all Israel will be saved." This reveals a universal blessing awaiting the ancient people of God. But it did nothing to lessen the gloom which in ch. ix. 3 almost forced from the patriot's heart a wish to be himself, on behalf of his brethren, separated from Christ by a curse which was, in the language of the Old Testament, an irrevocable doom. And it does nothing whatever to prove that Paul expected ultimate salvation for those individual Jews who had gone down into the grave "enemies of the cross of Christ."

Besides the above passages, I know not of any which assert or imply, or seem to imply, that all men will eventually be saved.

To sum up. Paul states clearly, and in several places, that God's purpose of salvation embraced every son of Adam; but he never says that in every one that purpose will be actually accomplished. And manifestly the kindness of God is resisted by many whose "impenitent heart" refuses to be led to repentance, and of whom Paul writes in Rom. ii. 5 that they are treasuring up for themselves wrath in the day of the righteous judgment of God. Moreover even in the epistle which depicts in most glowing language God's universal purpose of salvation, Paul speaks casually, but very solemnly, of some "whose end is destruction;" and we find nothing

in his writings to modify this terrible assertion. We are therefore compelled to believe that in his mind the universal purpose of salvation was consistent with the final exclusion from its glories of some of those originally included in its scope.

Whether, beyond the wide horizon of the apostle's knowledge, and thought, and hope, the universality of God's purpose of salvation itself suggests or implies an ultimate salvation for those who die rejecting the salvation offered to them in the Gospel, we shall consider when the entire teaching of the New Testament is before us.

LECTURE XIII

THE FOURTH GOSPEL

IN John iii. 16 we meet again, as a description of that from which God gave Christ to save men, Paul's technical and favourite term, *be destroyed* or *perish* or *be lost*: "That every one who believes in Him may not *perish*, but may have eternal life." So ch. x. 28: "They shall not *perish* for ever, nor shall any one snatch them out of My hand." The active form of the same verb, in the sense of *lose*, occurs in ch. vi. 39: "All that which (as we should say, All those whom) Thou hast given Me, that I should not *lose* any of it (of them) but should raise it (them) up at the last day." The same active form, in the sense of *destroy*, is found in ch. x. 10, referring to a wolf destroying sheep. Similarly, and in complete harmony with the classical use of the word as expounded in Lect. xi., in ch. xi. 50 Caiaphas suggests that it is better "that one man die on behalf of the people, and not that the whole nation *perish*." He refers evidently to the utter ruin which seemed to hang over the Jews.

The same technical term, as a description of the unsaved, is found also in the Synoptic Gospels. So

Matt. x. 28: "who is able to *destroy* both soul and body in Gehenna." And ch. vii. 13: "broad is the way that leads to *destruction*." See Lect. xiv.

This use of the same Greek word, in documents so dissimilar as the Synoptic Gospels, the Fourth Gospel, and the Epistles of Paul, suggests very strongly that its Aramaic equivalent was actually used by Christ, and in the same sense. And we have already seen that the chief idea conveyed by the Greek word is utter ruin, without thought of what becomes of the ruined object. We therefore infer with confidence that this was the chief thought of the earliest Christians about the fate of the unsaved, and that this conception was derived from, or sanctioned by, Christ.

The phrase *anger of God* is used, in the sense familiar to us in the writings of Paul, in John iii. 36: "He that believes not shall not see life, but the *anger* of God abides upon him."

On p. 142 we saw that in the Epistles of Paul the destruction awaiting sinners is called *death*; so in John v. 24, 1 John iii. 14, "is passed out of death into life," salvation is described as a present escape from death. This escape is permanent: so John vi. 50, "that one may eat of it, and not die;" and ch. xi. 26, "he that believes in Me shall not die, for ever." His body will descend into the grave and become a prey of worms: but even bodily death will not be to him, as it will be to others, utter ruin.

Another remarkable feature of the teaching of Paul (see p. 142), of John, and of our Lord as

recorded in each of the four Gospels, now demands our most careful attention; viz. the word *life*, and especially the term *eternal life*, used to describe the state of the saved as distinguished from the unsaved. Sometimes believers are said to have been already made alive in Christ, and to have life as a present possession: at other times life is spoken of as a hope for the future.

In Eph. ii. 5 we read that "God has *made-alive* with Christ us who were dead." So John iii. 36, "He that believes on the Son has *eternal life*." And ch. v. 24: "He that believes . . . has *eternal life*, and . . . is passed out of death into *life*." Similarly, ch. vi. 47, 54. And 1 John v. 12: "He that has the Son has the *life*."

More frequently the word *life* refers to the future. So Rom. ii. 7: "To those who by way of perseverance in good work seek glory and honour and incorruptibility," God will give "*eternal life*." In ch. v. 17 we read, that "they who receive the gift of righteousness will reign in *life*." To those who have been liberated from the bondage of sin "the end" will be "*eternal life*," which is "*the gift of God*:" ch. vi. 22, 23. They who "put to death the actions of the body *will live*:" ch. viii. 13. And they who "sow for the Spirit will from the Spirit reap *eternal life*:" Gal. vi. 8. Hence in Phil. ii. 16 the Gospel is called "*the word of life*;" and in ch. iv. 3 we read of the "*book of life*." In 1 Tim. vi. 12 men are bidden to "*lay hold of eternal life*;" and in v. 19, of "*that which is really life*." In 2 Tim. i. 1 we

have a “promise of *life* in Christ Jesus,” who (*v.* 10) “has brought to light *life* and incorruptibility through the Gospel.” Similarly in Tit. i. 2, iii. 7, we have “hope of eternal *life*.”

In the Fourth Gospel and in the First Epistle of John the same terms, *life* and *eternal life*, in the same sense as in the above quotations from Paul, are very common. Nor are they uncommon in the Synoptic Gospels. Matt. vii. 14 has already been quoted. In ch. xviii. 8, 9, our Lord contrasts “entrance into *life*” with being “cast into the eternal fire.” In ch. xix. 16, 17, one asks what he shall do in order that he “may have *eternal life*;” and the Teacher replies, “If thou desirest to enter into *life*, keep the commandments.” And in *v.* 29 He speaks of some who “will inherit *eternal life*.” We read in ch. xxv. 46, that in the great day some will “go away into *eternal life*.” Similar teaching is attributed to Christ in the Second and Third Gospels. Cp. Dan. xii. 2: “Some will awake to *eternal life*.”

That this remarkable phraseology is found in documents so widely different in phrase and thought as the Epistles of Paul, the Fourth Gospel, and the Synoptic Gospels is complete historical proof, even apart from the authority of Holy Scripture, that the words we are considering were actually used by Christ to describe the reward of righteousness. Moreover, this use of the word *life* to describe the state of the righteous as contrasted with that of the wicked, implies that *life*, in the sense given to

this word by our Lord and by Paul, is not an inalienable possession of all men, good and bad. And this is confirmed by the fact that, although the word *life* is used to describe present bodily life on earth, it is never once used throughout the New Testament to describe the future state of the lost. Rev. xix. 20, "living they two were cast into the lake of fire," is no exception. For it merely keeps up the personification implied in the terms *wild beast* and *false prophet*, by a graphic reference to the fate of Dathan and Abiram in Num. xvi. 30, 33. Beyond the grave there is no life except for those who are in life-giving union with Christ. On the last day, as we read in John v. 29, they who have done evil will go forth from their graves: but they will have no share in the "resurrection of *life*."

In Matt. vii. 13, 14, "the way leading to *life*" is contrasted with that "leading to *destruction*." Similarly, in John iii. 16, we have the contrast, "may not *perish*, but may have *eternal life*." Another contrast is given in v. 36: "He that disbelieves the Son shall not see *life*; but the *anger* of God abides upon him."

Another contrast to *life* is *death*, spoken of sometimes as present, at other times as future. So in Eph. ii. 1, Col. ii. 13, men still living are spoken of as "dead through trespasses." A dissolute woman is said in 1 Tim. v. 6 to be, "even while *living*, *dead*." So in 1 John iii. 14: "we have passed out of *death* into *life*. . . . He that loves not abides in

death." On the other hand, we read in Rom. vi. 21, 23, "the end of those things is *death*," and "the wages of sin is *death*;" and in ch. viii. 13, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall *die*." All this we understand. Inasmuch as they are beyond human help, as a dead man is, the unsaved may be spoken of as already *dead*. But inasmuch as only the future will reveal the awful destruction awaiting them, they may be described as on the way to death.

We now ask, What light does this phraseology cast upon the future punishment of sin? What is involved in the life already possessed by, and in fuller measure awaiting, the children of God; and in that death which is the wages and end of the service of sin?

Evidently the death which is the punishment of sin is, in its full development, much more than the death of the body. For this is the common lot of all men, good and bad. Nevertheless, since the word *death* was originally and is most frequently used to describe the end of bodily life, from this common use must be derived its meaning when it describes the present or future state of the unsaved. What then is our chief idea of the death of the body? Not annihilation. For a body which has ceased to breathe is just as dead if preserved by the embalmer's art as if reduced to dust. And the Greeks spoke of slain men as *dead*, even though some writers, e.g. Homer, believed that in another state of existence the departed are still conscious;

without any suggestion even of the ultimate cessation of consciousness.

What then is the idea conveyed by natural death? I think that it is cessation of the normal existence of a certain conspicuous class of objects, and their consequent utter ruin. This class of objects is distinguished by well-known characteristics which go to make up our idea of *life*. A corpse is *dead* because the normal existence of a *living* body has ceased. It is true that sickness also is abnormal. But health passes into sickness by imperceptible gradations; whereas bodily death is marked off from life by a broad and unmistakable line. To pass that line is to the body absolute ruin. And this ruin is natural *death*.

Already we have seen that in the New Testament the word *destruction* denotes utter and hopeless ruin, whether the object destroyed be annihilated or maintain a worthless existence. We saw also that the same word was a common synonym for natural death, even with men who believed that the dead were still existing and conscious. It is now clear that the death which is the punishment of sin is a synonym of the word *destruction*, which already in Lect. xi. we have found used in the same sense. It is utter and hopeless ruin of body and spirit. As such, it may be spoken of as present: for sinners are in a state of ruin, from which they can be saved only by the hand of Him who raises the dead. Or it may be spoken of as future: for present ruin will in a day to come receive its tremendous consummation.

Perhaps I may add that, just as the corruption of a dead body sinks infinitely below the worst corruption of disease, so we are compelled to believe that the consummation of punishment in the great day will go far beyond the worst moral corruption on earth.

It is also worthy of note that, just as bodily death is separation of the body from the unseen and inward principle which was once its life, so spiritual death is separation of man from Him who is to all intelligent creatures the Spirit of life.

Having thus in some measure and with some confidence determined the meaning of the word *death* when describing the punishment of sin, we shall now be able to determine the meaning of the word *life* when describing the reward of righteousness. Since death does not imply annihilation, there may be existence and consciousness without life. Of this we have a good example in the slain heroes whom Ulysses, as we read in the *Odyssey*, (see p. 124,) met and conversed with in the realm of the dead. These had consciousness and intelligence, but not life. Life therefore is more than existence and consciousness.

Now we read in Rom. vi. 23, John iii. 16, and elsewhere, that *eternal life* is the gift of God in Christ to those who believe. But this by no means implies that all others will sink into unconsciousness at death, or at judgment, or ultimately. For there is a life higher than that of the body: and this higher life is the hope of the children of God. It includes

not only conscious existence, but blessedness. Consequently, the loss of blessedness is the loss of this higher life. And, that this higher life belongs only to the saved, is no proof or presumption that all others will sink into unconsciousness. For the loss of life is simply the loss of all that which gives to existence its real worth.

The doctrine of "the immortality of the soul" and the confusion introduced by this phrase into Christian Theology will be discussed in Lect. xvi.

The phrase *eternal life*, so frequently used in the New Testament to describe the reward of the righteous, sheds light on the word *eternal* or *age-lasting* when used to describe the destruction awaiting the wicked. We have seen that in 2 Cor. iv. 18 it denotes a very long period of time in contrast to a short period: "for the things seen are temporal; but the things not seen, *eternal*." Now, apart from the meaning of this word, unquestionably the life of the righteous will be absolutely endless. For it will be an outflow of the endless life and the infinite love of God. They are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, in an inheritance incapable of corruption, defilement, or decay: Rom. viii. 17, 1 Pet. i. 4. They are predestined from eternity to be conformed to the image of the Son of God: Rom. viii. 29. To conceive a limit to their blessedness, is to set bounds to the infinite life and love of God: and this is impossible. "He shall reign over the house of Israel to the ages: and of His Kingdom there shall be no end:" Luke i. 33. We

notice now that the adjective *eternal* is selected by Paul and by every writer in the New Testament except James to describe this endless life. No stronger term is ever used by them. And we notice that this word, with these associations, is selected by Paul and others to describe also the destruction of "those who know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus; who will pay penalty, even *eternal destruction*." This confirms our inference from the words "whose end is destruction" that ultimate restoration of those condemned at the great day lay altogether beyond the hope or thought of the great apostle. See further in Lect. xiv.

Another passage bears directly on the matter before us. In John xv. 6 we read, from the lips of Christ, that if any one do not continue in Him, he is like the branch cast outside the vineyard and withered, such as men collect and cast into the fire and are there burnt. Similarly in Matt. xiii. 30, in a picture of the final judgment, the wicked are compared to weeds bound together to be burnt up. The same metaphor is traced, in ch. iii. 10, 12, Luke iii. 9, 17, to the lips of the Baptist: "Every tree that bears not good fruit is cut down and cast into fire; . . . the chaff He will burn up with fire unquenchable." This last phrase denotes evidently an irresistible destruction from which there is no rescue. The fate of the barren trees is re-echoed by Christ in Matt. vii. 19. Destruction by fire is found also in Heb. vi. 8: "That which bears thorns and thistles

is reprobate and near to a curse ; whose end is to be burnt." In all these passages the punishment of sin is compared to the destruction of vegetable matter by fire. And in the last passage this is said to be "the end" of the ungodly.

On the other hand, in 1 Peter i. 7 we have the metaphor of gold tested by fire : "and in 1 Cor. iii. 13 the judgment day is compared to a fire which will test every man's work.

Notice in these two classes of metaphors two distinct and opposite effects of fire. Faith is compared to gold which is tested by fire, and thus proved to be genuine. But whenever fire is used as a symbol of the future punishment of sin, the wicked are compared to vegetable matter, to vine branches, or fruit trees, or chaff, or weeds, all which are destroyed utterly, and never purified or benefited, by fire. Throughout the New Testament there is no hint that the punishment of sin, under the image of fire, is remedial. It is always put in a form suggesting only destruction. For no destruction is more complete than that of vegetable matter by fire. And this metaphor is found, as we have seen, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and is attributed in the First, Third, and Fourth Gospels to Christ, and in the First and Third to John the Baptist. It confirms strongly the teaching of Phil. iii. 19, 2 Cor. xi. 15, Matt. xxvi. 24, Mark xiv. 21, that the punishment of the wicked is final.

Can we go a step further, and say that the metaphor of destruction by fire teaches or suggests the

annihilation of the wicked? Certainly the burning of vegetable matter comes as near to annihilation as do any natural phenomena. For the consumed branches and weeds become in a short time altogether invisible. And we notice that in the Greek text both John the Baptist and Christ are represented as using the strong word *κατακαύσει* (-σαι), or *burn-up*, to describe the fate of the lost. Do they mean that the soul itself will be dissipated into non-existence, and that unconsciousness will be the ultimate fate of those who to the end refuse the offers of mercy?

It may be at once admitted that, if the annihilation of the wicked were as plainly taught elsewhere in the New Testament as is the finality of punishment in the passages quoted above, it would, like this last doctrine, be confirmed by the metaphor before us. Indeed this metaphor suggests search for such teaching. But the search is in vain. Outside the metaphor we are considering the New Testament contains, as we shall see in Lect. xvii., no hint whatever that the unsaved will ever cease to be. Now metaphor, unless supported by plain teaching, or at least by other metaphor agreeing with it only in the point in question, is a most uncertain basis of doctrine. For all comparison fails somewhere. And, when doctrine is built simply on one metaphor, it is impossible to distinguish between the essential teaching, and the mere drapery, of the metaphor. If punishment be final, this is of itself sufficient to justify the use of the metaphor of destruction by

fire; and therefore marks the limit of its doctrinal significance.

One more passage claims special attention. In John xii. 32 Christ makes the remarkable prediction, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all to Myself." At first sight His words seem to mean that He will actually save all men. We inquire whether this appearance is confirmed by further research.

At once we notice that we have not here the emphatic phrase "all men," so conspicuous in Rom. v. 12, 18, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 4; nor the words "every man" as in John i. 9. This by no means implies, and perhaps does not even suggest, that the word *all* does not include the entire race. But it is worthy of note that the evangelist does not use a definite term ready to his hand and manifestly embracing all men. He is satisfied, in his reproduction of our Saviour's meaning, with a somewhat looser expression.

At the same time it is not easy to see how the word *all* can have a scope less than all mankind. Certain foreigners had come, seeking an interview with Jesus. Their arrival greatly moved Him. In them He sees the forerunners of multitudes from all nations who will soon reach out their hands to Him for salvation, the beginning of a world-wide empire. But between Himself and that vast dominion looms in fearful outline the shadow of His cross. Only through suffering can He enter His glory. The cross must be the stepping-stone to the kingdom. For the nations will come to Him only when drawn

by mysterious influences proceeding from Himself, influences which cannot be exerted till He has borne the sins of the world and has entered the Holiest Place to make intercession for men. That He may attract others, Himself must "be lifted up."

These last words are explained by the evangelist as referring to the approaching crucifixion. And such apparently is the reference of the same words in ch. iii. 14f: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must needs the Son of Man be lifted up, in order that every one that believes in Him may have eternal life." But the words added here, "from the earth," suggest a further reference. Christ's shameful elevation on the cross is the first step towards the throne. And from that throne He will send forth the Holy Spirit, the mysterious Agent of a divine influence, which will draw the nations to Christ. Only by Himself rising can He raise them.

We now ask, In what sense will Christ draw all men to Himself? A partial answer to this question is suggested in Rom. ii. 4, where Paul says that God is leading to repentance a man of impenitent heart, who is treasuring up for himself anger in a day of anger. Evidently he means that upon this impenitent man "the kindness of God" is exerting influences tending towards repentance. These influences are the strong hand of God drawing him towards better things. It is equally certain that these influences are utterly in vain: for the man has a "heart without repentance," and is still on the

way to destruction. Indeed the penalty awaiting him is day by day increasing. He is heaping up a treasure of anger to be in that day revealed. These influences, real, though in this case through man's resistance utterly ineffectual, Paul describes by the categorical indicative, "God is leading thee to repentance." The same tense is used in the same sense in Gal. ii. 14. Peter by his bad example was unintentionally doing his utmost to force the Gentiles to adopt Jewish modes of life. This Paul describes by assuming that he is compelling them to do so: "why compellest thou, etc.?" Yet we have no proof or presumption that the Gentiles yielded to this compulsion. But whatever they did, a real influence was brought to bear upon them. Hence the Greek indicative.

Similarly, in Acts vii. 26, Stephen says, in reference to the two contending Israelites in Egypt, that Moses was reconciling them or "bringing them to peace." But we have no hint that his efforts were in the least degree successful. Yet here again we have a Greek indicative. Our translators (A.V. and R.V.) have felt the unsuitability of the English indicative, and have rendered in harmony with our mode of thought, "would have set them at one again." Another good example is found in 2 Macc. vii. 1, where men are described as "being compelled" to eat forbidden food: yet they refused to eat, and died without eating.

It is now evident that in their modes of conceiving and expressing ineffectual influences, the Greek and

English languages differ. But the Greek mode of thought is as correct as our own, and more graphic. The hand of God was actually upon the impenitent man, exerting an influence which was none the less real because it was resisted, and was therefore ineffectual: the work in which Moses was engaged with the two Israelites was peace-making, although it brought no peace: and upon the seven brothers the strongest possible influence was brought to bear to compel them to eat pork; but in vain.

This Greek mode of speech, and Paul's teaching in Rom. ii. 4, explain and limit the words of Christ in John xii. 32. For the apostle's assertion must be true of all men. Otherwise the man of impenitent heart, who is evidently a pattern of all such, could not be blamed for not knowing that the kindness of God was leading him to repentance. Moreover, whatever God does to man He does through the agency of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we read in 1 Cor. viii. 6: "through whom are all things." In other words, the assertion implied in Rom. ii. 4 is but a fulfilment of the prediction and purpose of Christ recorded in John xii. 32. And this purpose is suitably expressed in the language actually used in this last passage. For whatever the Greek present indicative asserts touching time present, and the Greek imperfect about some time past of which the writer is thinking, the future indicative asserts about time to come. They describe an action going on in present, past, or future time. If, as Paul's words imply, Christ had resolved to exert on all men

an influence drawing them to Himself, He might correctly say, even though He foresaw that in many cases, through man's resistance, this influence would be ineffectual, according to the usage of the Greek language, "I will draw all to, or towards, Myself." And there is in the context nothing whatever suggesting that He meant more than this. Consequently the passage before us in no way contradicts John xv. 6, Phil. iii. 19, 2 Cor. xi. 15, and other passages which imply an expectation that some men will be finally excluded from the glories of heaven.

Notice also that the teaching involved in John xii. 32 is a necessary complement to that of John vi. 44: "no one can come to Me, except the Father who has sent Me draw him." For unless these influences, needful for salvation, were given to all men, the blame of each one's destruction would not lie at his own door.

The Fourth Gospel has not materially increased our knowledge of the future punishment of sin; except that it has taught us that Paul's favourite mode of conceiving it, viz. as utter ruin, was equally familiar to the evangelist, and was by him confidently attributed to Christ. We have found one passage which at first sight seemed to suggest that the salvation brought by Christ would actually reach and save all men. But this seeming contradiction to the plain teaching of Paul vanished before more careful research. In an opposite direction we found a metaphor suggesting the ultimate extinction of the

lost. But the uncertainty attaching to all doctrinal inferences based only on metaphor warned us not to accept this suggestion as decisive. On the other hand, in this metaphor, and in the irretrievable completeness of the destruction of vegetable matter by fire, we found a strong confirmation of other New Testament teaching which asserts that the ruin of those condemned in the great day will be final.

LECTURE XIV

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

IN the Synoptic Gospels, punishment by fire at the end of the world occupies a position much more conspicuous than it has in the Epistles of Paul and in the Fourth Gospel. This conspicuous element of New Testament teaching demands now our careful attention.

As we have already seen, the lost are compared to barren fruit trees, to chaff, and to weeds, destroyed by fire. The slight variety of metaphor makes more conspicuous the element common to all these passages, viz. the destruction of vegetable matter by fire. And, than this, no destruction is more complete and final.

In connection with the metaphor now before us, we find, in Matt. v. 22, "the Gehenna of fire." The word *Gehenna* occurs again in vv. 29, 30, "cast into Gehenna;" and in ch. xviii. 9 we read of "the Gehenna of fire." So ch. x. 28: "fear Him that is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." The same word is in Mark ix. 43 used as an equivalent of "the unquenchable fire." It is found also in Luke xii. 5. Thus in each of the Synoptic Gospels

the Valley of Hinnom is used as the symbolic locality of the future punishment of sin.

This singular reference to a valley close to Jerusalem is explained in Jer. vii. 31: "They have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire." Similarly, ch. xix. 4-7: "Because they have forsaken Me, . . . and have built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons in the fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, . . . therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that this place shall no more be called Topheth, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter."

Whether or not the victims of these idolatrous sacrifices were burnt alive, we do not know. But our Lord's use of the metaphor of fire to describe the punishment of sin suggests irresistibly intense suffering, like that caused by burning. For the metaphor is evidently designed to teach the tremendous punishment awaiting sinners. But the mere burning of one already slain adds nothing to the punishment inflicted. It is therefore impossible to doubt that our Lord, as His teaching is recorded in the passages quoted above, used the word *fire* in order to convey the idea, not only of irreversible ruin, but of intense suffering.

This idea of conscious suffering in connection with the metaphor of punishment by fire is placed beyond doubt, and is thrust into marked prominence, in Matt. xiii. 42: "shall cast them into the furnace of

fire; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." The exact repetition of these words in v. 50 adds to their awful significance. The wail of anguish proclaims, in language which cannot be misunderstood, the conscious torment of those who suffer this fearful punishment. The same words are found again, in ch. xxiv. 51, as a description of the lot of the hypocrites; and in chs. viii. 12, xxii. 13, xxv. 30 as a description of "the outer darkness." The occurrence of this remarkable phrase six times in the First Gospel, and again in Luke xiii. 28, reveals its large place in the thought of Christ, and the deep impression made by it on the mind of the evangelist. But it is worthy of note that in all these passages nothing whatever is said either about the end or the endlessness of this severe suffering. The curtain is lifted for a moment several times, revealing a vision of anguish; but we have no indication of its duration.

An equally terrible description, from the lips of Christ, of the future punishment of sin is given in Mark ix. 43-48. It is no casual allusion, but a most solemn threefold delineation of the fate of the lost, supporting a most startling threefold exhortation. After announcing the reward of those who perform even the least service for His disciples, our Lord threatens terrible punishment for those who lead them astray. He then turns to His hearers, and three times bids them make the greatest earthly sacrifices, even to surrender hand or foot or eye, rather than to "go away to Gehenna." This last

word Christ at once expounds by the addition, "to the fire unquenchable." In the second warning we have simply the phrase, "cast into Gehenna." In the third, we have the same phrase with the remarkable addition, "where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched." These added words are evidently parallel to the words, "fire unquenchable," in the first warning.

This remarkable phrase, which occurs in the New Testament only here, recalls at once the closing words of the Book of Isaiah. The prophet sees a new heaven and a new earth. And in that new world, from month to month and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh will come to worship before God. Yet, amid that glory, the glorified ones will go forth and behold the corpses of those who have sinned. Manifestly, therefore, not all men will share that final glory. For the visible corpses of the rebellious ones proclaim the doom of the spirits which in those bodies once sinned against God. This dark shadow, falling so terribly across the bright vision, the writer deepens by saying that "their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched." The undying worm suggests the continuance of the awful spectacle. For if there were no corpses to feed upon, the worm would die: and if there were no fuel, the fire would be extinguished. In this last sense the Greek word here used by the Lxx. is found in Matt. xxv. 8, where the foolish maidens say that for want of oil their "*lamps are going out:*" *σβέννυνται*. For these sinners there is, therefore, no rescue: else the worm would

die for lack of food, and the fire be extinguished through lack of fuel.

The plain reference of this passage to the new heaven and earth, when the old things have passed away, proves that the fire and worm are metaphorical. And this is placed beyond doubt by the impossibility of the same corpse being consumed by fire and by worms. Moreover, the trees and chaff and tares are manifestly metaphorical. So must be the fire which destroys them. In other words, the passages before us do not in the least degree imply or suggest that the wicked will be punished by material fire.

The prophet adds that the lost ones "shall be an abhorrence to all flesh;" i.e. to the worshippers who in Isa. lxvi. 23 are so described. The word *abhorrence* occurs again in a similar context in Dan. xii. 2: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to eternal life, and some to shame, to eternal abhorrence."

The collocation of fire and worm is found also in Judith xvi. 17, where the "fire and worms" are evidently instruments of suffering: so Sirach vii. 17. See p. 117. These passages suggest that this combined metaphor was not uncommon among the Jews to describe the future punishment of sin.

These words, from the Book of Isaiah, our Lord adds to the terrible picture in Mark ix. 48 as a description of Gehenna. The easiest explanation of them is that they were added to convey the idea of intense suffering, like that caused by the gnawing of a worm or by fire. But the change

from "will not die" and "will not be quenched," in Isa. lxvi. 24, to the present tense in Mark ix. 48, "their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched," suggests continuous suffering in the present rather than endless suffering in the future. This change of tense and the difficulty of the metaphor forbid us to interpret this passage with confidence as an assertion of the endless torment of the lost.

In Matt. v. 25 the lost are said to be cast into a prison from which they will not escape till they have paid the last farthing. But these words add nothing to the results already gained. They contain no indication whether or not the debt will some day be paid and the prison door opened, but merely assert that, until the debt is paid, the prison will remain closed.

In Matt. xii. 32 we read, "Whoever may speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in that which is to come." But it is utterly unsafe to infer from this negative assertion that for some sins there is forgiveness beyond the grave. On the other hand, it reveals to us sin unforgiven, and therefore punishment continuing, throughout the age of ages to be introduced by the great day, an age extending to the furthest limit of human thought. In the parallel passage, Mark iii. 29, we read that "whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit has no forgiveness for ever, but is guilty of an eternal sin:" i.e. he is inwardly held fast by the agelasting grip of

the unforgiven sin. There is no suggestion here of continuance in actual sin; but a clear reference to the abiding result and penalty of a past sin. The “*agelasting sin*” corresponds with the “*agelasting punishment*” in Matt. xxv. 46.

The word *tormentors* in Matt. xviii. 34, and *torment* in Luke xvi. 23, 28, will be discussed in Lect. xv.

In Matt. xviii. 8 we have the phrase “cast into the eternal fire,” and in ch. xxv. 41 our Lord foretells that in the great day He will say to those on His left hand, “depart, ye cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” The phrase *eternal* or *agelasting fire* is found again in Jude 7; where of Sodom and Gomorrah we read that they “lie before us undergoing punishment of eternal fire.” The writer refers, as we saw on p. 139, to the strange desolation which for long ages had conspicuously rested upon the site of the cities of the plain. The *fire* was *eternal*, not as an everburning flame, but as producing *agelasting* effects. From that flame there was for the doomed cities no rescue; although after destroying them the fire soon burnt itself out. The use of the phrase *agelasting fire* to describe the conspicuous destruction of the cities of the plain warns us that, when used by Christ to describe the doom which in the great day He will pronounce, this phrase does not necessarily assert the endless suffering of the lost. But it suggests irresistibly their final ruin.

In Matt. xxv. 46 “the eternal fire” is further described in the awful announcement, “these shall

go away into *eternal punishment*, but the righteous into eternal life." These solemn words demand now our most careful study.

The Greek word here rendered *punishment* and its cognate verb are used by classical writers for the pruning of trees, the cutting away of anything superfluous, and the restraining of what would otherwise go beyond bounds. They are also used not unfrequently in the sense of punishment. Aristotle, in his *Rhetic* bk. i. 10, distinguishes the word *κολάζω* used here from *τιμωρέω* used in Acts xxii. 5, xxvi. 11, by saying that the former is punishment for the good of him who suffers it, the latter for the satisfaction of him who inflicts it. But, that this distinction is not universal, even in classical Greek, we learn from Euripides, *Helen* l. 1172, where we read of punishment by death, *θανάτῳ τοὺς κακοὺς κολάζομεν*, which could not be remedial. The same word is used in Acts iv. 21: "They let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them." And certainly the idea of the moral benefit of punishment was very far from the thought of those who were unable to punish the apostles. The same word is found elsewhere in the New Testament only in 2 Pet. ii. 9, 1 John iv. 18. The verb and substantive occur sixteen times in the Book of Wisdom, thirteen times in the Books of Maccabees, and in a few other places in the Septuagint. But not once in the Lxx. or in the New Testament does the context suggest the idea of remedial punishment, or anything beyond the penalty of wrong-doing.

We now ask, Does the word *punishment* necessarily imply actual suffering and therefore continued consciousness? So large a proportion of punishment involves suffering that the word suggests the idea. But there are forms of punishment which are merely deprival of good, apart from actual suffering. Indeed a child who, instead of going to an entertainment, is put to bed and goes to sleep may be said to be undergoing punishment even while asleep. For, had he not misconducted himself, he would have been awake and in pleasure. Taken by itself, the word *punishment* does not imply actual suffering. We have, however, found other passages, e.g. Matt. xiii. 42, in which our Lord asserts the actual torment of the lost. This torment must therefore be part of their punishment. And we have seen that several New Testament writers assert that punishment will be in proportion to each one's sin, that this involves consciousness, and that consciousness of the lost can be no other than acute suffering. But, since not all punishment is suffering, we have no right to infer that in this case suffering and punishment are co-extensive.

In the passage before us, Matt. xxv. 46, the *punishment* awaiting the wicked is said to be *eternal* or *agelasting*, in contrast to the *agelasting life* awaiting the righteous. This threatened punishment is made more terrible by the awful command foregoing in v. 41: "depart from Me, ye cursed, into the *agelasting* fire prepared for the devil and his angels." For the fire and the punishment must be practically identical.

A similar collocation of reward and punishment is

found in Dan. xii. 2: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to eternal life and some to shame, to eternal abhorrence."

We now ask, Does the word *eternal* or *agelasting*, in this last passage and in Matt. xxv. 46, denote absolute endlessness?

Indisputably, as we saw on p. 168, the "eternal life" awaiting the righteous will be absolutely endless. But this does not imply that even in this phrase the word *eternal* or *agelasting* denotes endlessness. For this last idea is mentally supplied from what we know about the nature and purpose of God. The word itself denotes only long duration extending to the writer's mental horizon.

A good example of this word used twice in one verse to describe a limited and an unlimited period is Tit. i. 2, where we read of a "hope of life *eternal* which God promised before times *eternal*." These last were the long ages which elapsed between the first promise of salvation and its manifestation in Christ: see p. 138. But these times, though long, were not unlimited. On the other hand, the life promised is absolutely endless. The length, in each case, of the *age* during which the "life" or the "punishment" lasts is left to the intelligence of the reader.

It is, however, worthy of note that in Matt. xxv. 46 the "agelasting punishment" and "agelasting life" are alike in the future; and are consequently in much closer relation than are the "agelasting life" and "agelasting times" in Tit. i. 2. This

closer relation suggests, though it does not absolutely prove, that the punishment will be as enduring as the life.

We now ask, Does *agelasting punishment* involve agelasting suffering? Already we have learnt that the punishment of the wicked will include acute suffering: and indisputably the word *agelasting* describes the duration of the punishment, or at least of its effect. But, without doubt, the "destruction" awaiting sinners will include, not only actual suffering, but loss of the endless blessedness for which all men were created. Consequently, whether or not the suffering continues, the punishment will be as lasting as the life which but for his sin the sinner would enjoy. For punishment does not cease till the person punished is restored to the position in which he would have been had he not sinned. Similarly, the civil penalty of death is not measured by the pain inflicted, but by the loss of life. No one thinks, apart from any retribution beyond the grave, that the punishment is over when the criminal is dead. This is well put by Augustine in his *City of God* bk. xxi. 11: "He who for some great crime is punished with death, do the laws reckon his punishment by the space of time in which he is put to death, which is very brief, and not by this, that he is removed for ever from the society of the living?" *In sempiternum auferunt de societate viventium.* Similarly, whatever becomes of the lost, their punishment must be said to continue so long as they are not restored to the favour and life of God.

The above exposition of Matt. xxv. 46 was anticipated by Irenæus in his work on *Heresies* bk. v. 27²: “They then who, by their apostasy, have cast away the things before mentioned, as being deprived of all the good things, experience all punishment, not that God immediately punishes them, but that punishment follows because of their having been deprived of all the good things. Moreover, the good things from God are *eternal* and *endless*: *αιώνια καὶ ἀτελεύτητα*. And, because of this, the deprival of them is *eternal* and *endless*; just as, the light being continuous, they who have blinded themselves or have been blinded by others are continuously deprived of the enjoyment of the light.”

This ancient exposition is of utmost value. For it is the earliest exposition we possess of the passage before us, written in the second century, by a writer whose mother tongue was the language of the New Testament. The whole exposition proves clearly that he had no idea whatever that *eternal punishment* necessarily involves endless suffering. He asserts, as I do, that deprival of eternal life is itself eternal punishment, whatever becomes of the persons punished.

Most of Irenæus’ great work exists only in a Latin translation. But of this passage, fortunately, we possess the original.

It is worthy of note that “the wailing and gnashing of teeth” found six times in the First Gospel and once in the Third is never said to be “agelasting” or “for ever and ever.” When our Lord speaks

about the actual suffering of the lost, He says nothing about its duration. On the other hand, we have as yet found no hint that their suffering will ever cease.

If the above exposition of the word *punishment* be correct, the various passages which assert or imply the finality of the doom of the lost imply also the absolute endlessness of their punishment. For if destruction be the end of the wicked, and if but for their wickedness they would enjoy endless blessedness, then is their punishment endless. And in this light we must interpret the great passage before us.

In Matt. xxvi. 24, Mark xiv. 21, our Lord says of Judas, "It were good for him if that man had not been born." But if, after ages of suffering, the traitor were at last admitted into the endless and infinite blessedness of the saved, that blessedness would be worth having, even at the cost of the terrible suffering preceding it. It would, in the light of eternity, in which light Christ ever spoke, be better for him to be born, and cast into the lake of fire, and then pass into eternal life rather than never to have existed. These solemn words, at the most solemn crisis of the life of Christ, seem to me to be little or nothing less than an assertion that Judas will never enter the rest of heaven.

The Synoptic Gospels have added materially to our reproduction of the teaching of the New Testament about the future punishment of sin. Already from the Epistles of Paul and from the Fourth Gospel we had learnt that the fate of the lost will

be ruin, utter and final. And Paul, by teaching that punishment will be in proportion to sins committed, and consequently capable of increase, had implied that the punishment inflicted in the great day will not be immediate annihilation, which would be alike to all, but a graduated punishment, involving at least a temporary consciousness. This slight indication of conscious suffering beyond the last judgment has now received terrible confirmation. The door of the eternal prison has been in a measure opened by the hand of Christ, and through it we have heard a voice of wailing and gnashing of teeth. And the metaphor of fire, already used by Christ as His words are recorded in the Fourth Gospel, has received an extension which can be explained only as intended to convey the idea of acute suffering. The wailing is not expressly said to be endless; but we find no suggestion whatever of escape from it. We have found a combined metaphor quoted by Christ from the Book of Isaiah: "their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched." It suggests incessant suffering. Twice the doom of the lost has been described as *eternal* or *agelasting fire*, and once as *agelasting punishment*. A casual remark of Christ recorded in the First and Second Gospels implies clearly that Judas will never enter heaven; and this one case involves a possibility that others also may be finally lost. It thus confirms other teaching of the New Testament which asserts or implies the finality of the doom which will be pronounced by Christ in the day of judgment. But the Synoptic

Gospels contain no clear assertion of the endless suffering of the lost.

The Book of Acts does not add materially to the teaching of the rest of the New Testament about the future punishment of sin. As their addresses are recorded, the apostles were more eager to announce the resurrection of Christ and His Gospel of pardon than to describe the fate of the disobedient.

In Acts iii. 21 Peter says in reference to Christ : "whom heaven must needs receive until the times of the restoration of all things." Evidently he refers to our Lord's Second Coming. But we have no right to interpret these somewhat indefinite words as an announcement of a restoration of all men at the coming of Christ, and thus make them contradict the abundant and plain teaching of the New Testament. The same phrase is used by Christ in reference to a prophecy fulfilled in the appearance of the Baptist : "Elijah comes, and restores all things." Certainly the great forerunner brought in no universal salvation. This shows how uncertain a foundation for any such doctrine are these words of Peter.

LECTURE XV

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

TWO famous passages, 1 Pet. iii. 19, iv. 6, which assert that at His death Christ went in spirit and made proclamation to the spirits in prison, and that to dead men good news was announced, in order that, though condemned in flesh, they may live in spirit, I must pass over. For I am unable to give any satisfactory explanation of them. And it is most unsafe to build up theological doctrine on passages of which the general drift is uncertain. Moreover I cannot detect in these passages any reliable addition to the teaching of the rest of the New Testament. Possibly they shed an uncertain ray of light on some who have gone down to the grave without hope. But this by no means even suggests a probation beyond the grave. For it is quite possible that the good news announced beyond the grave was a reward for loyalty during life to such truth as these imprisoned ones possessed. Certainly this difficult passage gives no hope for those who have died rejecting the Gospel.

The Second Epistle of Peter¹ and that of Jude are closely allied, and may well be studied together. A conspicuous feature of 2 Peter is the word *ἀπώλεια* or *destruction*, which occurs five times, and the cognate verb twice. The verb occurs twice in the Epistle of Jude. With these writers, as throughout the New Testament, these words are technical terms for the future punishment of sin. Evidently the chief thought of the early followers of Christ about the fate of those who reject the Gospel is that of ruin, the loss of all that gives worth to existence. For this, as we saw in Lect. xi., is the radical meaning of the word. This meaning is illustrated by 2 Pet. iii. 6, which says that at the Flood the then world was *destroyed*. This destruction was manifestly not annihilation, but, apart from the family of Noah, utter ruin. Nor was it final ruin. But it was a ruin from which only the power of the Creator could save the world. This confirms my earlier exposition of the meaning of the word.

This ruin is said to be inflicted at the great day, which is therefore called in 2 Pet. iii. 7 a "day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly men." Meanwhile they are undergoing punishment. So ch. ii. 9: "The Lord knows how to rescue devout men from temptation, but to reserve unrighteous men in punishment for the day of judgment." The

This reference involves no assumption about the authorship of this epistle. Indisputably, it is an early Christian document; and may therefore be appealed to as illustrating the meaning of the words here used.

state of the lost is further described in ch. ii. 17: "For whom is reserved the gloom of darkness." In Jude 13 we have the same words, with the terrible addition that this awful doom is "for ever" or "for an age."

We turn now to the Book of Revelation. In so doing we must not forget its picturesque and dramatic character. In it, as in the parables of Christ, we look not so much for exact definition of doctrine as for vivid presentation of familiar truth. It must be read in the light of the plain statements of the rest of the New Testament. Only so far as its figures are confirmed elsewhere, or at least as various figures confirm each other, can we safely build upon them doctrinal inferences.

A very conspicuous feature of the Book of Revelation is its use of the words *βασανίζω* and *βασανισμός*, which we may provisionally render *torment*, to describe the future punishment of sin. A cognate word we have already found in Matt. xviii. 34 in the same connection of thought. In other connections, the same family of words occurs several times in the Gospels and in the Apocrypha. The total difference of environment will make these passages most useful guides in our search for the radical meaning of the word.

These words were the technical term in Greek for the examination of witnesses by torture. They then passed easily to denote any infliction of acute suffering. A good example is found in 2 Macc. vii.

8, 13, 17, where both the substantive *βάσανος* and the verb *βασανίζω* are used to describe the acute and somewhat prolonged torments inflicted on the seven martyrs. Similarly, in Matt. viii. 6, a paralytic boy is said to be grievously *tormented*. In Luke xvi. 23 we read that Dives lifted up his eyes, being in *torments*, and saw Abraham afar off. In v. 24 the sufferer describes his own condition: "I am in anguish in this flame." And in v. 28 he speaks of his abode as "this place of *torment*." In a looser sense we have the word in Mark vi. 48: "seeing them *tormented* in rowing." This suggests the pain of intense effort. Similarly, in 2 Pet. ii. 8 Lot is said to have *tormented* his righteous soul with the lawless works of the men of Sodom: a very strong way of describing the pain thus caused him. The word denotes evidently acute suffering. But in the last two places it is used, not literally, but rhetorically. This warns us not to claim for it, wherever used, a literal meaning.

In Rev. xii. 2 the same word describes the agony of childbearing: in ch. xi. 10 we read that "the two prophets *tormented* those dwelling upon the earth." In ch. ix. 5 we are told that to the locusts who went forth from the smoke "it was given that they should not kill" those that had not the seal of God on their foreheads, "but that they may be *tormented* five months." A description is added of the pain thus caused: and their *torment* is as of a scorpion's *torment* when it strikes a man." We have here actual suffering inflicted and felt.

With these associations of thought connected with

the word before us we now turn to three tremendous passages in which it is used. In Rev. xiv. 9-11 we read : "If any one worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, also he shall drink of the wine of the fury of God." These last words describe the stupefying effect of this punishment. The strange collocation of words following, "which is mixed unmixed in the cup of His anger," suggests a combination of different elements together with undiluted intensity. This terrible description of suffering is then strengthened by a change of metaphor: "they shall be *tormented* with fire." To this is added a new element: "and sulphur." A visible memento of suffering is seen in "the smoke of their *torment*." So to Abraham looking towards Sodom, as recorded in Gen. xix. 28, "the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace." But in this last passage the word *torment* is not used. Probably when in the morning Abraham looked towards Sodom the agonies of its inhabitants were over. In the passage before us the word *torment* implies clearly consciousness and agony. And we are told that "for ages of ages the smoke of their *torment* goes up." (The Revisers have properly accepted a reading of the Greek text which gives to this prolonged duration special prominence.) Even this does not close the terrible description. A few more words take us almost into that sulphurous flame, and reveal the ceaseless unrest of the sufferers there: "and they have no rest day and night." An announcement of suffering so terrible requires careful

specification of the sufferers: "who worship the wild beast and his image, and if any one receives the mark of his name."

This passage recalls at once Isa. xxxiv. 8-10, where, in reference to Edom, the prophet says, "It is a day of punishment for Jehovah, a year of retributions for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into sulphur, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste: none shall pass through it for ever and ever." The best commentary on this passage is the desolation which for some two thousand years has rested on the land of Edom. But this remarkable fulfilment at once proves that the prophet's language was not literal, but rhetorical. For no such smoke now goes up. Yet the prophecy is none the less fulfilled in the utter and conspicuous desolation which for long ages has rested on the ancient home of these enemies of Israel. And this awful doom could not, for the moral purposes for which it was given, have been better described than in the words used by the prophet. But the wide difference between the literal meaning of his words and their actual fulfilment warns us not to build accurate statements of doctrine on the pictorial details of unfulfilled prophecy.

This ancient prophecy suggested probably the smoke ascending for ever in the passage before us. The chief point common to the two prophecies is

the utter and irreversible ruin foretold, in the one case as the doom of an ancient enemy of Israel, in the other as the doom of those who worship the present evil world.

Comparison suggests, however, points of conspicuous contrast. In the doom of Edom the word *torment* and the other conspicuous marks of actual personal suffering found in Rev. xiv. 10, 11 are altogether wanting. The earlier prophecy speaks only of the desolate country, without any express reference to the punishment and suffering of individuals; whereas in the later prophecy we have individual sinners, a twofold statement of their sin, and words teaching clearly the painfulness of their punishment. This marked difference forbids us to bring down the meaning of the later prophecy to that of the earlier.

Another terrible vision in the Book of Revelation is the judgment upon Babylon, another reminiscence of the Book of Isaiah. In Rev. xviii. 7, 8 a voice cries, "Give to her *torment* and mourning. . . . In one day shall come her plagues, death and mourning and famine: and in fire she shall be burnt up." Kings and merchants (*vv. 9 and 15*, a conspicuous repetition) will wail "when they see the smoke of her burning, standing far off because of the fear of her *torment*." This last word, used twice, implies, as we have seen, actual suffering; and indeed makes this the chief feature of the whole picture. But in this passage nothing is said about the duration of the torment.

The mention in Rev. xvii. 9 of "seven mountains on which the woman sits," and the explanation given in v. 18, "the woman which thou sawest is the great city which reigns as queen over the kings of the earth," leave no room to doubt that this remarkable prophecy refers to ancient Rome. In the days of the Apostles, Rome was as powerful as Babylon ever was; and twice in the first century it was a terrible enemy of the servants of Christ. The motive which prompted the prophecies against Edom and Babylon would prompt equally this prophecy against Rome. But its fulfilment differed much more from the literal meaning of the prophet's words than did the fulfilment of the earlier prophecies. Nothing like the judgment of the great harlot as here described has ever taken place, or can take place. This is another warning not to build our expectation of the future on the literal meaning of ancient symbolic language.

Still more difficult to understand, than the doom pronounced on Babylon, is that pronounced in Rev. xix. 20 on the wild beast and the false prophet: "alive they two were cast into the lake of fire burning with sulphur." These words describe the overthrow of a power symbolised as a wild beast which in the previous verse has been described as leading "the kings of the earth and their armies" to war against Christ, who is symbolised as sitting upon a horse. Into the same lake of fire and sulphur, as we read in ch. xx. 10, after the Millennium and the Great Apostasy the devil was cast. And we

are there told that all three "will be tormented day and night for the ages of the ages."

The former passage recalls Num. xvi. 33, where we read that the men who followed Korah, with all they had, "went down living to Sheol (or, Hades); and the earth closed over them, and they perished (Lxx. ἀπώλοντο) from the midst of the assembly." But these sinners were at once hidden from view; whereas we read of continuous and long-continued torment awaiting the wild beast and the false prophet.

To interpret these figures is very difficult. In themselves, they might be taken as aggregates of individuals. But in what sense such aggregates were cast living into the lake of fire before the Millennium, we cannot conceive. This warns us that the terrible prophecies of the Book of Revelation were designed, not to gratify our curiosity touching the fate of the wicked, but to deter men from sin.

Into the same lake of fire, as we read in Rev. xx. 13f, were also cast, after they had given up their prey, both Death and Hades and every one who was not found written in the Book of Life.

With ch. xxi. opens a new scene, an absolute and glorious contrast to the verses preceding. Beyond the great white throne and the wreck of the present world, and the fearful doom of sinners, appears, in conspicuous contrast to the city which has passed away in the consuming flame, another city, the New Jerusalem, as a bride adorned for her husband. And

in the splendour of that vision, as portrayed in vv. 1-7, we seem to forget both sin and its punishment. "He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death shall be no longer: neither shall there be any longer mourning, nor cry, nor toil. For the former things have gone away." These words taken alone might suggest a complete extinction of all evil. But that this is not so, we soon learn. Even across this landscape of undimmed glory creeps a dark shadow. From amid that brightness we catch a glimpse of sinners and their awful doom, depicted in the colours already so familiar: "But the cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all the liars shall have their part in the lake burning with fire and sulphur, which is the second death." The dark shadow is but for a moment, and the bright vision returns. From a lofty mountain we see again the holy city descending out of heaven from God. And as it approaches we mark its lofty walls, its vast proportions, its gates of pearl, its streets of gold, its foundations of precious stones, and its splendour, making needless the light of the sun. But again a dark shadow is flung across the scene, a shadow the deeper because of the brightness of the light intercepted. "There shall not enter into it anything common, and he that makes an abomination and a lie; but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life." Again the shadow vanishes. We see (ch. xxii. 1-5) the river with its trees of life bearing many fruits and leaves of healing. "And there

shall be no curse any longer. And the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it. And His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no longer. And they need no light of lamp or light of sun: for the Lord God will give them light. And they shall reign for the ages of the ages."

The vision is over. The angel assures John that "these words are trustworthy and true." And he adds, in *v.* 11, other words of solemn import. "The unrighteous man, let him be unrighteous yet more; and the filthy man, let him be defiled yet more: and the righteous man, let him do righteousness yet more; and the holy man, let him be sanctified yet more." Surely these words are not addressed to men still living. And, if not, they must describe men contemporaneous with the foregoing visions of glory. This is confirmed by *v.* 15. Blessing hastens to follow curse: "Blessed are they who wash their robes in order that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may go in through the gates into the city." But side by side of this blessing we have another vision of punishment: "Outside are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one who loves and makes a lie."

These deep shadows falling four times across the bright vision with which closes this wonderful Book of Revelation are most significant. Touching some bad men living in his own day, Paul wrote, in

Phil. iii. 19, "whose end is destruction." This judgment we now see fulfilled. On the utmost verge of the prophet's farthest vision, and outside the eternal and glorious home of the righteous, we see men who are still characterised by the sins they committed on earth. In former visions we have seen them in actual suffering. And we now see them conspicuously shut out of the blessedness of the city of God.

The teaching of the New Testament about the doom of the wicked is now before us. Several of its writers speak of those condemned in the great day as *destroyed* or *lost*, using a term denoting utter ruin. The same word is used also to describe the present state of the wicked; and is a common synonym for natural death. This last use of it makes natural death a symbol of both the present and future state of the unsaved.

This ruin is in the Epistles of Paul twice, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the First Epistle of Peter, spoken of as the *end* of the ungodly. This teaching is confirmed by casual yet solemn words of Christ about the fate of Judas; and by a metaphor, found in all four Gospels and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the fate of the lost is compared to the destruction of vegetable matter by fire. All this proves clearly that the writers of the New Testament looked upon the impenitent as finally shut out from the blessedness awaiting the righteous. Against this plain inference,

we have in the New Testament nothing to set. We are there frequently taught that God's purpose of salvation includes all men: but we have no assertions or indications that in all men it will be actually accomplished.

The metaphor of the destruction of vegetable matter by fire suggests perhaps the dissipation of the consciousness of the lost. But this suggestion finds no confirmation in the New Testament. For *destruction*, as the word is used there and elsewhere, does not imply annihilation. And, inasmuch as life is, in the New Testament, much more than existence, the reservation of the word *life*, touching the world to come, to describe the state of the saved does not prove or suggest that others will eventually cease to exist.

About the future state of the lost, except that it will be utter ruin and an absence of all that gives worth to existence, nothing is said in the Epistles of Paul or in the Fourth Gospel. But we find there, clearly taught, retribution in the day of judgment in proportion to action good and bad. And this implies continued conscious existence: for unconsciousness admits of no degrees. But it does not imply endless consciousness. In the Synoptic Gospels, the wail of the lost reveals their actual and acute suffering. But nothing is said about its duration, except that its continuousness is suggested in a metaphor of an undying worm and fire unquenched. We read twice of *agelasting fire*. But the use of the same phrase elsewhere forbids us to infer

from it more than the lasting effect of the fire. We read also of *agelasting punishment*. But permanent injury or loss, inflicted by a judge in consequence of sin, may be so described even though the subjects of it eventually sink into unconsciousness. On the other hand, the solemn contrast of life and punishment, each agelasting, suggests that in each case the sentence is irreversible.

In the Book of Revelation, actual suffering is much more conspicuous even than in the Synoptic Gospels. The worshippers of the wild beast are in ceaseless torment: and for ages of ages the smoke of their torment goes up. To the ages of the ages also will continue the ceaseless torment of the mysterious object of their worship, of the lying prophet who deceived them, and of the leader whom they followed. The book closes with a sublime picture of the glory of a new heaven and earth, the happy home of the children of God. But across that bright vision deep shadows fall revealing the continued existence, shut out from the joys of the city of God, of some who in spite of the salvation announced by Christ are still unrighteous and defiled.

To sum up. The writers of the New Testament agree to describe, with more or less definiteness, the punishment to be inflicted in the day of Christ's return as actual suffering and as final exclusion from the blessedness of the saved. They give no ground for hope that the agony of the lost will ever cease: but they do not plainly and categorically assert its endless continuance.

The careful student will notice how much less abundant and decisive is the evidence just recapitulated than is that on which rest the primary doctrines of the Gospel, such as the divinity of Christ, salvation through His death and through faith, and the new life in the Spirit of God. According to our need we have received. The historical foundations of the Gospel of pardon are immovable and broad. And the teaching of Christ and His apostles about the future punishment of sin is abundantly sufficient for the moral purposes it had in view; but it is not sufficient for dogmatic assertion by us touching the exact destiny of the lost.

LECTURE XVI

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

BEFORE we go on to discuss the practical significance of the Biblical evidence now before us, another important doctrine which in all ages has greatly influenced Christian thought, bearing most closely on the future punishment of sin, claims our attention.

Plato teaches frequently, and represents Socrates as teaching, that the soul of man is in its own nature "immortal and indestructible." This he argues plainly in his *Phædo* 105c—107c, also in his *Republic* bk. x. 608d—611b, *Meno* p. 81, and *Phædrus* pp. 245, 246. He uses such terms as *ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀνώλεθρον* and *ἀθάνατος ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ οὐδέποτε ἀπόλλυται*, and much similar language. His arguments leave no room to doubt that he means to assert that for good or ill human consciousness will not and cannot finally cease. This doctrine he uses as a moral warning. So *Phædo* 107c: "If the soul is really immortal, what care should be taken of her, not only in respect of the portion of time which is called life, but of eternity! And the danger of neglecting her from this point of view does indeed

appear to be awful. If death had only been the end of all, the wicked would have had a good bargain in dying, for they would have been happily quit not only of their body but of their own evil together with their souls. But now, inasmuch as the soul is manifestly immortal, there is no release or salvation from evil except the attainment of the highest virtue and wisdom." On pp. 113d—114c he describes the torment of the wicked, from which in some but not in all cases there is no deliverance; and the blessings awaiting the righteous. A still more graphic picture of judgment and a more awful description of the sufferings of the wicked are quoted on p. 6 of this volume.

This teaching that the soul of man is immortal is reproduced, but on an immeasurably lower moral plane, in bk. i. of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*. He uses in §§ 11, 14, 32 the phrase *immortalitas animorum* or "immortality of souls." In § 16 he writes that "Pherecydes, a Syrian, first said that the souls of men are eternal" (*animos esse hominum sempiternos*); that his disciple Pythagoras held the same opinion; and that Plato was said to have come to Italy and there learnt the Pythagorean teaching "about the eternity of souls" (*de animorum aeternitate*). In § 32 Cicero speaks of the Stoics as saying that human souls survive death, but not for ever: *ainunt manere animos, cum e corpore excesserint, sed non semper*. Cicero accepts and indeed quotes (e.g. in § 23 we have a long quotation from the *Phædrus*) Plato's metaphysical arguments for the endless

permanence of the human soul. But, of Plato's conspicuous and noble teaching of moral retribution beyond death, he has but slight hold. He rather looks upon bodily life as an evil, and death as a release from it; thus contradicting Plato. Of the moral issues involved, he seems to have thought little.

Josephus (bk. ii. 8¹) reports that the Pharisees believed that "the bodies are indeed corruptible and their substance not abiding, but that the souls continue immortal always;" that the souls of the righteous pass the ocean to a place of rest and blessing, but that the wicked go to a subterranean abode "full of ceaseless punishments:" see p. 118. This teaching Josephus compares with that of the Greeks. He attributes similar teaching to the Essenes. Also in his *Antiquities* bk. xviii. 1^{3,5} he says that the Pharisees believed that souls have "immortal strength;" and that the Essenes "make souls to be immortal."

The above-quoted moral teaching of Plato differs conspicuously and in two points from that of the New Testament. The synonymous words *life* and *immortality* denote always in the New Testament a state of blessing; except where the words *life* and *living* refer to our present bodily life. The future state of the lost is never once called *life*: it is the second *death*. "They who by perseverance in good work seek for glory and honour and incorruptibility" will receive "eternal life." But the disobedient "will not see life." Plato, on the other hand, attributes

immortality to the souls even of the lost; but speaks of it as in their case a curse and not a blessing.

We need not wonder that the lofty moral teaching of Plato, already accepted by the most devout of the Jewish sects, and re-echoed in some measure by Cicero in the Latin tongue spoken in the Churches of the West, passed easily and imperceptibly into the Christian Church, and moulded its phraseology and thought about the future punishment of sin. Nor need we wonder that the important difference of phraseology just noted passed unnoticed. None the less have the teaching and phraseology of Plato, thus unconsciously engrafted on the teaching of Christ, been a source of endless confusion and misapprehension in Christian Theology.

Another still more important difference between the teaching of Plato and that of Christ and the New Testament is that the Bible never traces the eternal life promised to the righteous to any intrinsic and endless permanence of the human soul. Man was created neither immortal nor mortal, but *living*. Upon his own obedience depended (Gen. ii. 7) the continuance of that blessed state. As is well stated in Wisdom ii. 23, "God created man for incorruptibility:" but whether in each case His purpose will be accomplished, depends upon the man himself. Human life as first created, and life eternal in Christ, are, like the eternal life of the Son of God, an outflow of the life of Him "who alone has immortality." No other life or immortality except this does man

need for his highest blessedness: and no other is ever mentioned or referred to in the Bible.

Some have appealed, in support of the doctrine of the endless permanence of all human souls, to the wide-spread yearning for and anticipation of a life beyond the grave, which has found expression in literature ancient and modern. But this is small proof that in all cases this desire and anticipation will be realised, even when existence has become an unmixed evil. Others again have argued that the nature of the soul is simple and therefore incapable of dissolution. But who knows this? Even in bodily life consciousness is not always continuous. It is very often interrupted for a longer or shorter time by sleep or sickness or accident. To say that God cannot finally extinguish that which is so often extinguished for a time, is seriously to limit the Creator's power. Certainly He who out of unconsciousness and non-existence called both human consciousness and the simplest forms of matter can send them back to the non-existence from which they came. Moreover, if God gave to man a nature incapable of extinction, He did so in view of all consequences. Look at it as we may, if human consciousness will in all cases continue throughout an endless succession of ages, it does so simply and only because this is the will of God. That this is His will, we have no proof within or without the Bible. A doctrine thus destitute of foundation must be carefully eliminated from the whole subject before us.

Notice that the phrase *immortality of the soul* is, in modern literature, used sometimes to assert, as the New Testament writers always assume and imply, in words equivalent to plain categorical assertion, that the soul will survive death; at other times to assert, as the Bible never asserts or implies, its essential and endless permanence. This ambiguity warns us, if we use this phrase, or indeed the word *immortality*, to state clearly the meaning we give to it; or, better still, not to use the word at all except in the meaning it has in the New Testament, viz. as a description of the blessedness of the saved.

The earliest use, known to me, of the above phrase, by a Christian writer, is by ATHENAGORAS, an Athenian philosopher who became a Christian in the latter half of the second century. He writes, in his work on *The Resurrection of the Dead* ch. 13, that God "made man of an immortal soul and a body;" in ch. 24, of "men possessing an immortal soul and a rational judgment;" in ch. 20, of "the soul as incorruptible;" and in ch. 23, of an "immortal nature." Here for the first time probably in Christian literature we find the favourite phraseology of Plato: and, remembering that the writer was a student of Plato before he became a Christian, we cannot doubt the source from which it was derived.

The writer's aim is to prove the resurrection of the body: and in his effort to do this he shows much skill. His main argument is that the creative purpose of God included both soul and body; that each of these is an integral part of the man, is concerned

in his actions, and therefore must share his judgment and final destiny. Some of his arguments seem to imply that the creative purpose must necessarily be accomplished; and he tells us, in ch. 25, that the end of an intelligent creature is to delight in contemplation of God. But he admits that many men fail of this end. He does not discuss the ultimate fate of the lost; and leaves us in uncertainty whether or not all will finally be saved. His one point is to prove that in the destiny of man the body will share. In this he differs widely from Plato, who claims immortality only for the soul.

We come now to TERTULLIAN, who, in North Africa, wrote in Latin at the beginning of the third century. He accepts from Plato the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. So in ch. 3 of his treatise *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*: "Some things are known even by nature: the immortality of the soul, for instance, is held by many; the knowledge of God is possessed by all. I will use, therefore, the opinion of a Plato when asserting, Every soul is immortal." But, as a Christian, he rejects the theory of the uncreated pre-existence of the soul. So his treatise *On the Soul*, ch. 4: "When we acknowledge that the soul originates in the breath of God, it follows that we attribute to it a beginning. This, Plato refuses, representing it as not born and not made." In ch. 10 he says, "It belongs to firm faith to say with Plato that the soul is simple, i.e. uniform in substance." Throughout these two works, Tertullian constantly speaks of the soul as immortal in Plato's

sense of the word, and sometimes of the wicked as in endless suffering. So *Resurrection of the Flesh*, ch. 34: "We so accept the soul's immortality as to believe it lost, not in the sense of destruction but of punishment, i.e. in Gehenna." Also in ch. 35: "If any one supposes that the destruction of soul and flesh in Gehenna refers to an annihilation and end of both substances, as if they were to be consumed, not punished, let him remember that the fire of Gehenna is announced to be eternal, for eternal punishment, and let him recognise that eternity of killing is more to be feared than anything temporal which man could inflict." He argues, in ch. 14 of his treatise *On the Soul*, that, since the soul is simple, not composite, it cannot be dissolved or cease to be.

No one can read these two treatises of Tertullian, and compare them with earlier Christian literature, without feeling that this impulsive African has introduced into Christian literature, or given greater prevalence to, two new and lower elements, the natural immortality of the soul and the endless torment of the lost. In the sufferings of these last he exults with fiendish delight: *On Public Exhibitions* ch. 30. But I forbear to quote his awful lines.

Somewhat later, in a far different spirit, ORIGEN, the earliest Christian Biblical scholar, accepted the immortality of the soul, and from it inferred that all souls will ultimately be saved. In his *First Principles*, bk. iii. 13, we read: "It is not without reason then that he who is abandoned is abandoned to the divine judgment, and that God is long-suffering

with certain sinners; but because it will be for their advantage, with respect to the immortality of the soul and the unending world, that they be not quickly brought into a state of salvation, but be conducted to it more slowly, after having experienced many evils. For as physicians who are able to cure a man quickly when they suspect that a hidden poison exists in the body, do the reverse of healing, making this more certain through their very desire to heal, deeming it better to retain the patient for a considerable time under inflammation and sickness, in order that he may recover his health more surely, rather than to appear to produce a rapid recovery, and afterwards to cause a relapse and thus that hasty cure last only for a time; in the same way God also, who knows the secret things of the heart and foresees future events, in His longsuffering permits certain events to occur, and by means of those things which happen from without extracts the secret evil, in order to cleanse him who through carelessness has received the seeds of sin. . . . For God governs souls not with reference, let me say, to the fifty years of the present life, but with reference to the limitless age: for He made the thinking principle in its nature immortal and kindred to Himself: and the rational soul is not, as it is in this life, excluded from cure."

In the above quotations we see two practical and opposite consequences of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Tertullian inferred from it the endless suffering of the lost; Origen inferred

the ultimate salvation of all men. Each of these inferences seems to me legitimate; and each is prevalent now. They reveal the seriousness of the issues involved in the popular doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

The prevalence, in the Christian Church, of this doctrine is due probably to the immense influence of Augustine. This great father was familiar with the systems of the Greek philosophers; and among these gives the palm to Plato. He contradicts Plato's teaching that human souls are pre-existent and without beginning; and meets an argument that whatever had a beginning must have also an end. His whole teaching about the future punishment of sin rests on the assumption that the human soul is immortal. So his *City of God* bk. xiii. 2: "The human soul is truly affirmed to be immortal . . . it is said to be immortal because in some way it does not cease to live and feel." Similarly bk. xxi. 3: "Death will be eternal; since the soul, through not having God will not be able to live, nor by dying, to escape the pains of the body:" *semper eterna mors erit, quando nec vivere anima poterit Deum non habendo, nec doloribus corporis curere moriendo.* So a little lower. "The soul can suffer pain, and cannot die. Here is found a thing which, since it has sense of pain, is immortal." So elsewhere frequently.

Herodotus states (bk. ii. 123) that the Egyptians "were the first who taught that man's soul is immortal;" using the phrase soon afterwards so common in the writings of Plato. Indisputably the

Egyptians anticipated Plato by teaching that beyond death retribution awaits all men, good and bad. But they did not base this doctrine, as did Plato and probably Pythagoras, on the endless and essential permanence of all human souls: see p. 4. We need not wonder that Herodotus, a Greek stranger visiting Egypt, did not find out this important difference between teaching familiar to him and the belief of the Egyptians.

The phrase *every soul immortal*, or phraseology equivalent, is found, in Jewish or Christian literature, so far as I know, only in writers influenced by Greek thought, and indeed by Plato. To his influence, it was undoubtedly due. A similar belief underlies the religion of the Hindus. But the phrase is not found, in all ancient literature known to me, outside the school of Greek philosophy of which Plato is the most conspicuous representative.

The Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul is a curious example of an opinion destitute of any foundation in the Bible and in some measure contradicting it, derived only from Greek philosophy, yet held firmly by large numbers of educated and intelligent Christians and Christian teachers and writers on the mistaken supposition that it is taught in the Bible. It is also a remarkable example of one common phrase being used to describe two very different doctrines, one resting on a broad Biblical foundation and the other on uncertain metaphysical inference. See Notes G, H, N; also a short work by me on *The Immortality of the Soul*.

Another error to be carefully avoided is the opinion prevalent in certain circles that all will be lost except those who fulfil certain Christian conditions: e.g. the reception of baptism, or an inward spiritual experience assuring them of the favour of God. This opinion also has no foundation in the Bible. We read in Mark xvi. 16 that "he who has not believed will be condemned;" and in 2 Thess. i. 8 of "just punishment for those who obey not the Gospel." But this implies that the Gospel has been fairly set before them and has been deliberately rejected. These solemn words of Christ and of Paul give us no right to pronounce judgment on persons who have not had our own religious advantages and responsibilities and our own happy assurance of the pardoning grace of God.

Paul teaches in Rom. ii. 26, 27 that the uncircumcision of some who keep the Law will be reckoned for circumcision, and that they who, taught by nature, fulfil the purpose of the Law will pronounce sentence on some who, with a written law and circumcision, are yet transgressors of law. This can only mean that God will accept their obedience to the law written on their heart, fragmentary and imperfect as that obedience is and insufficient to be a basis of justification on strict principles of law; and will receive them into His favour and into life eternal. See further under the fourth theory discussed in Lect. xvii. This principle opens a door of hope for many even in Christian countries who have never heard the Gospel in its fulness and

power. And it opens a wide door of hope for all in heathen lands who have followed the guiding light, which God has put into the hearts of all men.

Another unwarranted belief prevalent in some less instructed Christian circles is that a great majority of those who attain adult age will be lost. Our Lord's teaching in Matt. vii. 13, 14 about the narrow gate and the few who find it, and the wide gate and the many who go in thereby, is a warning how difficult it is to do right and how easy to do wrong, and of the danger of going with the multitudes around us. But it is a very narrow foundation on which to build an estimate of the proportion saved and lost on the day of judgment. Christ came into the world, not to satisfy our curiosity about the fate of others, but to show us the path of life, and to dissuade us from the path which leads to destruction. And we have no right to use His words for a purpose for which they were never designed.

The removal of the above incorrect inferences, which have seriously hampered the investigation of the subject before us, leaves a way open for an estimate, in the light of all that bears upon it, of the practical significance of the teaching of the Bible about the future punishment of sin.

LECTURE XVII

THEORIES OF THE DOOM OF THE WICKED

WE have now seen that the various writers of the New Testament agree to teach that utter ruin awaits those who reject the salvation offered by Christ; that the Book of Revelation, and Christ as His words are recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, depict the lost as in actual sufferings, and that this is implied in Paul's teaching that punishment will be in proportion to sin. We have found in the New Testament no assertion or reliable suggestion that these sufferings will ever fade into unconsciousness: nor on the other hand have we found any unequivocal assertion that this consciousness of suffering will always continue. In other words, the duration of the actual suffering of the lost is not plainly stated in the New Testament. But we have found in the words of Christ recorded in each of the Four Gospels, and in the Epistles of Paul, assertions implying clearly that some will be finally excluded from the blessedness awaiting the righteous.

With these results of our study of the Bible we will now compare four theories prevalent more or less throughout the Christian era: viz. (1) Endless

torment, or at least endless suffering, of the lost, (2) Final salvation of all men, (3) Ultimate extinction of the lost, (4) Probation after death. These theories we will discuss in the light of the teaching of the New Testament as expounded above, and of whatever else we know about the character of God and about His administration of His Kingdom, thus viewing the topic before us as part of one harmonious revelation of God. Each theory I shall state in what seems to me its strongest form, and shall support by the strongest arguments I can find. The statements and arguments actually used by their advocates I shall reserve to be discussed in the notes at the end of this volume.

1. From the close of the second century, till recent years, the belief and teaching prevalent in the Christian Church have been that the doom pronounced on the day of judgment will be endless suffering. And this has been accepted as the teaching of the New Testament. The lost are there depicted as in actual torment. No limit to their suffering is suggested, except perhaps in the uncertain metaphor of destruction by fire. But this metaphor involves, as does other similar teaching, their final exclusion from the glory of heaven. Christ speaks of eternal fire and eternal punishment. And in the Book of Revelation the smoke of the torment of those who worship the wild beast goes up for ages of ages, and the beast and false

prophet are cast into a lake of fire where they will be tormented for the ages of the ages. All this has been interpreted to mean that the suffering of the lost will have no end. See Note H.

Until the memory of men now living both preachers and writers used language implying that this suffering will be as bad as the excruciating bodily agony caused by fire, this agony being continued for endless ages. In our day many have recoiled from bodily *torment* and have put the word *suffering* in its place. But the word *torment* (see pp. 184, 195 ff) is used in the New Testament to describe the future punishment of sin. Moreover, it is difficult or impossible to conceive a lost and ruined soul, in full possession of consciousness, doomed to exist for an endless succession of ages, and knowing itself to be finally shut out from the City of God, in just punishment of inexcusable sin, otherwise than as in unspeakable misery.

This widely-spread traditional doctrine reveals the seriousness of the equally prevalent belief, discussed in Lect. xvi., of the essential and endless permanence of the human soul and of human consciousness. For if the human soul be essentially permanent, the various statements in various parts of the New Testament which assert or imply the final exclusion of the lost from the blessedness of heaven imply also their endless suffering. The all-searching light of eternity, revealing in its reality whatever has been done on earth, will make the consciousness of the lost to be intolerable regret and shame for inexcusable

and awful folly and sin. The permanence of consciousness under such circumstances can be no other than endless torment.

But we have already seen that this doctrine, commonly called "the immortality of the soul," has no place in the Bible, and no adequate evidence elsewhere. Consequently, it cannot be appealed to in support of the endless suffering of the lost. The only ground on which this last doctrine can rest securely is the clear teaching of the Bible. What is this teaching?

On Dan. xii. 2, see p. 114.

In the Epistles of Paul and Peter and John, and in the Fourth Gospel, we have important teaching about the doom of the lost, implying actual suffering. But we have found there no statement or indication of its duration. Their silence on this subject is most significant.

In the Synoptic Gospels we hear, seven times, weeping and gnashing of teeth: but not once are we told that this will be for ever. Against the difficult metaphor of an undying worm and unquenched fire, must be set the burnt-up branches, chaff, and weeds, than which, nothing known to us comes nearer to annihilation. This apparent contradiction warns us not hastily to build important doctrines on metaphor. We have also seen (on p. 186) that *punishment* does not necessarily imply continued consciousness. Moreover, the words rendered in the New Testament *eternal* and *for ever* are in the Old Testament frequently used to describe the Mosaic

ritual and the possession of Canaan, both which have long ago passed away. To translate them *endless*, would make that ritual permanent. The phrase *eternal fire* is used in Jude 7 to describe the fire which destroyed Sodom; and similar language is used in the Old Testament to describe the coming desolation of Edom. We therefore cannot rely on the phrase *eternal punishment* or on the Synoptic Gospels for proof that the sufferings of the lost will be endless.

The dramatic pictures of the Book of Revelation, valuable as they are to impress upon us teaching clearly stated elsewhere, are a very uncertain basis for doctrine. For it is impossible to distinguish between the drapery of the picture and its essential teaching. The smoke of the torment goes up for ages of ages, a lasting monument of ruin: but this does not necessarily imply that the actual torment is equally lasting. The agelasting torment of the Devil, whose sin has been agelasting, is not necessarily a pattern of the fate of his victims: nor is the like punishment of the mysterious wild beast and the false prophet.

To sum up. If the endless suffering of the lost is to be found in the Bible, it must be in Dan. xii. 2, Mark. ix. 43-48, Matt. xviii. 8, xxv. 41, 46, Rev. xiv. 9-11, xx. 10. But, as we have seen, not one of these passages asserts or clearly implies this doctrine. Moreover, against them must be set Matt. iii. 10, 12, xiii. 30, 40, John xv. 6, Heb. vi. 8, which suggest the extinction of the wicked; and Rom. xiv. 11, Phil. ii. 10, 1 Cor. xv. 28, which

suggest very strongly the ultimate extinction of evil.

Moreover, we find in the New Testament other passages which, taken by themselves, suggest, or seem to assert, doctrines which we are compelled to reject. To thousands of devout men Rom. viii. 29, ix. 14-23, Eph. i. 4, 5, John xv. 16, have seemed to assert the doctrine of unconditional election and predestination, now almost universally repudiated. And Matt. xvi. 27, 28, xxiv. 34, seem to assert that Christ would come to judge the world during the lifetime of those around Him. These passages are quite as clear, in a sense we cannot accept, as are any which seem to assert the endless suffering of the lost. They warn us not to accept, especially in proof of a doctrine open to serious objection, a few texts from the Bible. All the great doctrines of the Gospel are supported by abundant and decisive teaching of Holy Scripture. And no doctrine ought to be asserted with confidence unless thus supported.

Very serious reasons warn us not lightly, by accepting the theory before us, to go beyond the clear and decisive teaching of the Bible.

Not only against the endless torment of the lost, as our fathers taught it, but against any form of endless suffering, or of an endless prolongation of an existence which is only a helpless consciousness of utter ruin, the moral sense of thousands of intelligent and devout men and women is in stern revolt. The more carefully they consider it, the less are they able to harmonise it with the infinite love, or even

with the justice, of God. To such persons, it is useless to say that they are unable to estimate the evil of sin, and the punishment it deserves. For, amid human fallibility and error, there is in man an inborn sense of justice and of the due proportion of sin and punishment which, in all ages, has been recognised as a reflection, imperfect but real, of the justice of God. There are children of ten years old who, if told that their father had punished another child, however naughty, by burning him to death, would at once and justly repudiate the statement with indignation. Moreover, the picture of Christ in the New Testament, and His teaching as recorded there, claim and secure the homage of the moral sense of man, and this homage paid by that in us which is noblest and best to the teaching and character of Christ is the most powerful proof of His divine excellence. A doctrine which, instead of gaining the homage of our moral sense, drives it into revolt, has no moral authority over us. Man's sense of right and wrong needs to be educated; and at best is fallible. But, as taught by Paul in Rom. ii. 14, 15, it is a divine transcript of the Law of God; and as such, it cannot be silenced even by quotation from the Holy Scriptures.

To the educated moral sense of our day, and not to more careful study of the passages in the Bible to which appeal was formerly made, must be attributed the almost universal rejection now of the doctrines of unconditional election and reprobation once firmly held by many devout and intelligent men. To the

same cause must be attributed the universal rejection of the doctrine, once even more prevalent, that the lost will endure the torment of material fire, a doctrine which has, on the surface of the Bible, not a little support. At the same bar must be judged the doctrine of the endless suffering of the lost.

On the authority of the moral sense, see further in Note A.

Various attempts have been made to remove the difficulties referred to above. In all ages, the profound mystery of evil has perplexed the mind of man. But this difficulty is somewhat lessened by our observation that frequently suffering and even temptation to sin have been a means of moral discipline, and thus of benefit to those who suffer and are tempted. The theory before us involves the immensely greater difficulty of the endlessness of suffering. It implies that God will inflict on the wicked a punishment which will perpetuate evil in the form of suffering and in some sense of sin, and maintain an existence which has become an unmixed and unspeakable curse, for endless ages after His purpose of mercy has been fully accomplished.

Some have said that temporary suffering is as repugnant to our conception of God as is endless suffering. But will any one say that endless suffering of the righteous would present, if suggested, no greater difficulty than their temporary suffering? The one creates no difficulty: for we know it to be a means of blessing to the sufferer and to others. The other is inconceivable and impossible.

Doubtless the future punishment of sin will serve a moral purpose. But, so far as we can judge, endlessness of suffering cannot be needful, either for the lost, for whom there is no amendment, or for the saved, who cannot need for their instruction in righteousness an endless continuance of this painful lesson.

It may be said, in reply to the objection we are considering, that endless suffering is an inevitable result of man's sin. But, surely, this is an affirmation going far beyond our knowledge or capacity. For his rejection of salvation, the sinner alone is responsible. But the penalty of rejection cannot be put outside the will of God. If endless suffering be the punishment of sin, it is because this doom was approved by the infinite wisdom and love of God. In other words, nothing is gained by these attempts to minimise the serious difficulties which, to perplexed and fallible human judgment, surround the theory of the endless suffering of the lost.

Other considerations, however, in an opposite direction, also demand attention.

We are bound, under penalty of severe self-condemnation, to prevent sin to the utmost of our power. Especially are we bound to prevent one person from leading another into sin, and to protect the innocent against the violence of the wicked. Yet the omnipotence and wisdom and love of God do not prevent men from sinning and from leading others into sin, and permit the righteous sometimes to suffer because they are good and others bad.

Moreover, the consequences of sin are frequently

tremendous beyond all human sense of the proportion of sin and punishment. And we are sometimes appalled at the long continuance of these consequences. One transgression often produces results immeasurably beyond what either bad or good men anticipate. A single wrong step sometimes blights with hopeless ruin the whole course of subsequent life. And, stranger still, sometimes the sufferer feels that his long-continued and terrible punishment is but a due recompence for his sin. These consequences frequently follow, so far as we can see, without any compensating moral gain to the sufferer or to others; in some cases, by what seems like a mechanical sequence moving irresistibly and mercilessly forward to an inevitable doom, yet carrying with it the approval of the sinner's own conscience.

This apparently merciless sequence of sin and awful suffering not unfrequently contradicts our sense of humanity and justice. It thus reveals the infinite difference, amid important analogies, between the rule of God, in whose hands are all things and to whom all things are known, and all human conceptions of justice and mercy. This difference does not remove the serious objections mentioned above; but it warns us to use utmost caution in drawing inferences, even by way of objection, touching the doom of the wicked, from the character of God and His mode of administration.

All that we can safely say, in view of the deep shadow which conceals from us the consequences of sin, is that the difficulties involved in the theory

of the endless suffering of the lost are a very strong reason for most searching examination of the authority on which it rests. And, as we have seen, the few passages in the Bible (see p. 225) to which appeal can be made are an altogether inadequate foundation for confident assertion of a theory lying open to objections so serious.

The prevalence in the Church of the theory before us has little weight. The subject was never discussed in the undivided Church, nor was it formulated in the ancient creeds. The philosophy of Plato was the noblest school of thought in the ancient world. From him Augustine and others learnt the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Read in the light of this doctrine there is much in the New Testament which implies the endless torment of the lost. And this endless torment is plainly taught by Augustine: see his *City of God* bk. xxi. 9, 11, 17, 23. For, practically, the one doctrine involves the other. He taught also, with complete confidence, that unbaptized infants will be lost. To the same great father we owe, in no small measure, the terrible doctrine of unconditional election and predestination: see his treatise, *Reproof and Grace* ch. viii. 18.

The prevalence of this theory does not throw on those who object to it the burden of disproof. For he who speaks in God's name is bound to prove that his words come from God. Otherwise they have no authority.

2. Some have asserted or suggested, with more

or less confidence, that all men will eventually be saved. They remind us that Christ taught frequently that God is our Father, the loving Father even of the prodigal son, and that no father would permit his children to perish if he could possibly save them; that God is able to reveal even to the most obtuse the infinite evil of sin, to soften the hardest heart, and to lead back to Himself those who have gone furthest astray; that the highest aim of punishment is amendment, that where it does not produce amendment this highest aim is not accomplished, and that the final destruction of the lost would be the final and awful failure of the purpose and effort of God. Such failure seems to them inconceivable. They therefore suppose or hope that the punishment inflicted on the day of judgment will be designed to lead the punished ones to repentance and to life; and that in all cases this purpose will ultimately be accomplished. See Notes I, J, R.

This argument implies the final salvation of the devil and his angels. For they also are creatures of God: and He who can do all things can save them.

Like the theory of the endless suffering of the lost, this theory of universal restoration receives subtle and powerful support from the prevalent and popular theory of the essential and endless permanence of human consciousness. For this last theory leaves no alternative except either endless suffering or the ultimate salvation of all. Each side of this alternative has been accepted by not

a few as the only way of escape from the other. This one theory has thus become a foundation for two other mutually contradictory theories. But we have seen that the underlying theory is itself without foundation. It is therefore a treacherous foundation for the others; and must be carefully eliminated from the whole case now before us.

We have found in the New Testament many assertions or clear indications that some men will be finally excluded from the happy family of God: see pp. 141, 190, 204. If therefore the theory before us be correct, the apostles were in serious error in this important matter; and the agreement of all four Gospels leaves little room for doubt that the incarnate Son was Himself also in error. An hypothesis involving an inference so unlikely cannot be tolerated for a moment unless demanded by decisive evidence. What is the evidence? It is an appeal to the infinite power of God who is able to reveal, even to the most obdurate, the infinite evil of sin and thus lead him back to penitence and obedience; and to the infinite love which moved God to give His Son to die for all men.

Such appeal at once claims our respectful attention. A similar appeal I have already admitted in reference to the theory of the endless suffering of the lost. But the cases differ widely. The endless suffering of the lost and their maintenance in consciousness for long ages after consciousness has become worse than worthless are much more difficult to harmonise with the love of God than is their

final exclusion from the City of God. We can conceive a case in which we should respect a royal father for condemning his son to death: and we have no right to say that God will not inflict the extreme penalty of final exclusion from heaven. But we could not respect a father who inflicted on his son long-continued torment.

The cases differ also in that this final exclusion is plainly asserted by Christ and His apostles, whereas the endless suffering of the wicked is never clearly taught in the Bible. See p. 225.

All around us we see, permitted by God, much which no human father would permit. If we had the power, we should save our children from going into sin. Yet God, who has all power, permits sin: Some will reply that God permits it for a time, fully resolved ultimately to bring back the erring one to righteousness. To assert this, as a necessary truth, is to deny that God can or does commit a man's final destiny to his own choice. It limits man's free agency to a choice of a longer or shorter, a more or less painful, course of discipline. But we have no proof that the scope of man's free determination is thus limited. It is conceivable that God, who has evidently committed so much of man's destiny to his own action, may have committed to him his ultimate destiny. Certainly we have no right to deny that He has done so; and therefore we have no right to infer from God's power and love, and from the universality of His purpose of mercy, that all men will ultimately be saved. Still

less right have we to contradict, on these grounds, the decisive teaching of Christ and the apostles.

The only remaining argument is that perhaps the whole purpose of God touching those who reject the salvation offered in the Gospel was not revealed to the writers of the New Testament, that behind the threatenings therein contained lies hidden in the breast of God a secret purpose of mercy even for those about whom no word of mercy was spoken by the apostles or by Christ. This suggestion, I am in no haste dogmatically to pronounce impossible. Far be it from me to limit the mercy of God. But how unsubstantial is the basis on which this hope rests! It has no better foundation than man's conception of what he would do were he in God's place. And the worthlessness of this conception as a basis of expectation touching the future action of God is revealed in the fact, manifest to all, that before our eyes in His government of the world God is ever doing and permitting what no human father or king would do or permit. This intangible hope of mercy of which we find no trace in the covenant of mercy and in the record of God's infinite love lies beyond the range of practical theology. It has no place in the revealed truth of God.

Of the two theories now before us, the former is not contradicted by, although going beyond, the teaching of the Bible. But it lies open to serious objection based on the revealed character of God. The second theory contradicts the teaching of several

writers of the New Testament and of Christ as His words are there recorded; and has no reliable basis, direct or indirect, in the whole Bible or elsewhere. It is simply a very uncertain appeal to a purpose of mercy altogether hidden from, and inferentially rejected by, Christ and His apostles.

3. Others have suggested that, although the punishment inflicted on the great day will include actual suffering, this suffering will ultimately fade into unconsciousness. And some have confidently claimed that this ultimate extinction of consciousness is expressly and frequently taught in the New Testament. They appeal to the word *destruction* frequently used there to describe the doom of the wicked, and assert that it implies ultimate extinction; and to the phrase *eternal life* which everywhere describes a blessing reserved for the faithful servants of Christ. They also appeal to the metaphor of destruction of vegetable matter by fire as among natural phenomena the nearest approach to annihilation. A strong point in their favour is their contention that the natural immortality of the soul has no place in the Bible. See Notes K and L.

But we have seen, on p. 124, that destruction does not necessarily involve annihilation, but only utter ruin. If elsewhere the future punishment of sin were described as extinction, it might suitably be called *destruction*: for, wherever existence is worth having, extinction is absolute ruin. But endless suffering would be a still more awful ruin; and

might therefore with equal appropriateness be spoken of as destruction. We have also seen (on p. 165) that life is more than existence; and that therefore the absence of life does not necessarily imply non-existence. The only remaining argument from the Bible is the metaphor of destruction by fire: and we have seen (on p. 171) that metaphor is a most uncertain basis for important doctrine. Moreover, to overturn popular error does not necessarily prove the truth of, or even support, some contrary theory. Thus fail all proofs that the Bible teaches the ultimate extinction of the wicked.

On the other hand, this theory is not explicitly contradicted in the Bible. For, although its writers frequently assert, and imply still more frequently, the actual suffering of the lost, and their final exclusion from heaven, they stop short of asserting in so many words that these sufferings will be endless. This I have already shown, both in my exposition of the teaching of the New Testament and in my discussion in this lecture of the theory (No. 1) of endless suffering. In other words, between the first and third theories here discussed, the sacred writers, while apparently inclining sometimes to one and sometimes to the other, do not pronounce decisive judgment.

Against the theory now before us, looked upon simply as mere speculation destitute of any solid support in the Bible or elsewhere, no serious objection can be brought. It would leave room for the acute suffering depicted in the New Testament; and for punishment in proportion to sin. Extinction of

human consciousness cannot be rejected as impossible and inconceivable. For no small part of human life is passed in unconsciousness. And, certainly, whether in its nature it be composite or uncompounded, He who called out of unconsciousness and non-existence both the human soul and the simplest forms of matter can, if He will, send them back to the non-existence from which He called them. To deny this, is to impose on the power of the Creator an impossible limit. Nor can it be objected that extinction would be, not punishment, but relief. It would be punishment tempered with mercy. As involving loss of the endless blessedness for which man was created, extinction is endless and infinite punishment. For its result will never cease. But, for those to whom, through their rejection of the salvation offered by Christ, existence has become an intolerable burden, extinction would be an act of mercy. So, in a contrary direction, the actual death of Christ upon the cross was deliverance from the curse and burden of man's sin: looked at from another point of view, it was a supreme act of self-sacrifice. That extinction is contrary to the creative purpose of God, is no difficulty. For that purpose was primarily one of mercy. This mercy was made contingent on man's obedience. Through his sin, the chief part of the purpose, viz. infinite and endless mercy, was thwarted: and we have no right to infer that, in spite of this failure, the subordinate part of the purpose, viz. endless existence, must necessarily be accomplished.

That the theory before us is a less powerful deterrent from sin than is the theory of endless torment, can scarcely be urged as an objection. It would render equal support to every exaggerated picture of material fire. Our duty is, not to invent deterrents, but to use those revealed to us by God. Moreover, no deterrent is effective except so far as it commands the homage of the moral sense of man. Whatever teaching does not so commend itself is thereby weakened as a moral force. We gain nothing in any way by exaggerating the teaching of Holy Scripture.

This third theory does not lie open to the very serious objections which beset the theory of endless suffering. It does not involve the endless persistence of evil; nor, however terrible extinction may be to those created for endless blessedness, does it present to the moral sense the very great difficulties involved in the popular theory. And it permits us to look forward to a time when from the entire universe sin and sorrow will have alike vanished. The relief thus afforded and the prospect thus opened give to this theory a certain attractiveness.

These arguments in its favour seem to me, however, in the absence of any clear support in the Bible, and in view of the scantiness of our knowledge of the essential nature of the human soul, an altogether insufficient basis for confident belief or even plausible conjecture. For there may be another alternative altogether beyond our thought. The evidence before us is insufficient for reliable decision.

Nor need we wonder at our uncertainty. Had the ancient prophets formulated a definite theory of the glorious kingdom which they dimly foresaw, how unlike it would have been to the reality! But their visions were of infinite value as a bright light shining in a dark place, a light sufficient to guide the steps of all faithful servants of God. The visions of the New Testament were not designed to gratify our curiosity touching the fate of the lost; but to warn us against a path which leads to ruin. This definite aim is not obscured by their indefiniteness. Christ and His apostles teach plainly that they who reject the Gospel will perish in the darkness of endless night; and under that impenetrable gloom their fate lies hidden. This is all we know; and all we need to know.

The chief, perhaps the only, value of speculations such as the above is that a variety of theories warns us against confident dogmatic assertion. The relief we need from the difficulties involved in the future punishment of sin must be sought in another direction.

4. Inasmuch as many persons have lived and died without hearing the Gospel of Christ, while others have heard it only imperfectly set forth, and many have throughout life been in circumstances most unfavourable to morality and religion, it has been suggested that for such persons there will be probation after death and that to them will be given a further offer of salvation. This is another specu-

lative attempt to mitigate the difficulties involved in current theology. It contradicts a popular belief that the fate of every one is determined at death. See Note B.

Of probation after death, we have no hint in the entire Bible. Appeal has been made to 1 Pet. iii. 19, where we read that at His death Christ made a proclamation to some who were disobedient in the days of Noah; and to ch. iv. 6, where we read of good news announced to the dead. But no one has yet given even a plausible exposition of these difficult passages: and to build doctrine on obscure and casual statements in the Bible is most dangerous. Moreover, proclamation of good news after death does not necessarily imply or suggest further probation.

On the other hand, there is little or nothing in the Bible to contradict this suggestion. In 2 Cor. v. 10 we read that "all must needs appear before the judgment-seat of Christ in order that each may receive the things done through the instrumentality of the body." This proves that Paul looked upon the judgment as dealing chiefly or only with actions done on earth. But this uncertain inference is insufficient to support a theological argument. Touching probation beyond the grave, for it or against it, the Bible says nothing.

The theory before us is prompted by the apparent unfairness, in many cases, of the present probation. It is said that none can be condemned for rejecting the Gospel till it has been presented to them in

its fulness and power; and that since this is not done in the present life there must be probation beyond the grave. This implies that the only ground of condemnation in the great day will be rejection of the Gospel. But another ground of punishment and another basis of judgment are given in Rom. ii. 12-16. "So many as have sinned in law will be judged by means of law:" i.e. they who have the Law of Moses will be acquitted or condemned by Christ (*v.* 16) according to their attitude towards it. On the other hand, "so many as have sinned apart from law will also perish apart from law:" i.e. their destruction will be independent of the Law. On what basis they will be judged, is stated in *vv.* 14, 15, where we read that they who have no external law have a law written in their hearts. That, judged by this standard, some will be acquitted is implied in Paul's question in *v.* 26, "If the uncircumcision guard (i.e. carefully obey) the decrees of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision?" and in the assertion following, "And the uncircumcision derived from nature, fulfilling the Law, shall judge thee who with letter and circumcision art a transgressor of law." This can only mean that some who have only the light of the inborn moral sense, but follow it, will be accepted in the great day, while some Jews will be cast out. Such acceptance of them does not contradict the statement in Rom. iii. 20 that "by works of law no flesh will be justified." For neither Jew nor heathen could do works which merit salvation.

But Paul implies that God, who graciously accepts our faith in Christ as the condition of His favour, will also accept from them obedience to the light they had, imperfect and fragmentary though it be, as a condition of their salvation. In any case, we have here a standard other than the Gospel, by which will be determined the awards of the day of judgment. And, if so, a similar standard will doubtless be applied to many in Christian countries whose environment has been unfavourable. Even amid the deepest moral darkness around, each one has an inborn light. Where the Gospel is fully preached, that light will guide towards Christ. And we may fairly infer that in every case, as each one turns in the main towards or away from that light, dim as it may be, he will enter the light of life or sink beneath the gloom of the second death.

If, as Paul's teaching implies, there is in the present life, for each ordinary person who comes to mature age, an adequate probation, i.e. a sufficient test of his loyalty to that which he knows to be right and good, we have no need or right to expect a probation beyond death. This last suggestion is another result of supposing that none will be saved except those who by conscious faith accept the Gospel of Christ. And this supposition has no foundation in the teaching of Christ or His apostles.

Touching idiots and those who die in infancy, we know nothing. They will be dealt with by the wisdom and love of God. But their case lies outside the scope of the Gospel, and therefore sheds no

light on the fate of those who reject it. It warns us however that the whole subject of future retribution is surrounded by impenetrable mystery.

Probation beyond the grave, even if taught in the Bible, would not relieve the serious difficulties which surround the doom of the wicked. For, in a future probation, some might fail, just as in most favourable moral surroundings some now live bad lives and die in sin: and the fate of these would present the same difficulty as does the moral failure of men on earth. To suggest that they will be kept under repeated probation till all bow to Christ, is simply another form of universalism; and as such has been already discussed. On the other hand, we have no right dogmatically to assert that in no case will there be a probation beyond death. For the silence of the Bible does not warrant contrary assertion. And the case of little children warns us that the whole case is not before us. For, if there is no probation beyond death, they have no probation at all.

To sum up. Theories 2, 3, 4 are attempts to remove or lessen the difficulties involved in Theory 1. This last has been the traditional and popular theory of the Christian pulpit during long ages; but it goes beyond the plain teaching of the Bible, under the influence of a metaphysical theory which has no place there, and thus needlessly raises most serious difficulties. The other theories have no foundation in the Bible, or solid foundation elsewhere.

They are mere guesses, more or less plausible, designed to remove difficulties real or imaginary in the future punishment of sin. But they differ greatly in their relation to the teaching of Christ and His apostles. To this teaching, the second theory gives flat contradiction. Neither the first, third, nor fourth theory contradicts the plain teaching of the Bible; but the third theory avoids most serious objections to which the first theory lies open. The fourth theory removes no serious difficulty; and is therefore of value only as a warning against hasty assertion.

For confirmation of the above judgment, see notes M, N, O, P, Q.

LECTURE XVIII

THE RESULT

WE have seen that the writers of the New Testament agree to teach frequently and conspicuously that beyond the grave exact retribution awaits every one for all actions done in the present life; and that Paul indicates one all-important element of that retribution, viz. the revelation, to each one and to others, of his actions and their results and of his own character, in the intense reality of eternity. We notice also that this revelation and retribution are represented as taking place, not at death, but for the whole race at one definite time in the future.

To this doctrine of retribution, I can see no serious objection. Every loving father and every righteous king punishes those who do amiss. Such just punishment claims our respect; whereas failure to punish evokes severe condemnation. The impartial justice of God as depicted throughout the Bible secures at once the homage of our moral sense. And so does the exact retribution beyond the grave so conspicuous in the teaching of Christ and His apostles.

The various writers of the New Testament and Christ as His words are there recorded divide the human race at the last judgment into two widely separated classes. The one class will be received into a glory on which falls no shadow; and the other will be banished into a darkness in which we look in vain for one ray of light. Between these classes stands an impassable barrier. To our view, this dual division presents difficulties. It finds no place for a large number of persons who seem to us unworthy of either blessedness or destruction. This difficulty the New Testament does nothing to remove or mitigate. Christ promises to all who put faith in Him eternal life with God. But, having said all we need for our own salvation, He does nothing to satisfy our curiosity about the destiny of the persons just referred to. We must leave them to the wisdom and love of our Father in heaven.

The various writers of the New Testament describe the punishment to be inflicted on the great day as ruin, utter and hopeless and final. The Synoptic Gospels also represent Christ as teaching, and the Book of Revelation teaches, in plain and awful language, that the lost will suffer acute and continuous pain. This actual suffering is implied in the teaching of the Fourth Gospel and of Paul that retribution will be according to works. For proportionate retribution involves degrees of punishment; and degrees of punishment imply consciousness; for unconsciousness is alike to all. Moreover, consciousness of endless and glorious life forfeited

through our own inexcusable folly and sin involves remorse and mental anguish beyond conception. Even in human life on earth, remorse has often been more terrible than bodily suffering. To escape from the visible consequences of their sin, and from the intolerable burden of a consciousness of their baseness, men have sought refuge in the gloom of death. How vain this attempt, even heathen philosophers have taught. To be compelled, in the unsparing light of eternity, to contemplate our own past sins, when all fascination of sin has worn away, and our rejection of the infinite love of God and our consequent and deserved loss of the glories of heaven, and this without room for amendment or hope of restoration, will be an undying worm and unquenchable fire. In other words, the vivid pictures in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Book of Revelation do but delineate a necessary inference from teaching permeating the entire New Testament.

Of this acute suffering of the lost, the writers of the New Testament see no end; nor do they teach anything which logically implies, or even suggests, that it will ever end. On the other hand, they do not go so far as expressly and indisputably to assert the endless permanence of these ruined and wretched ones, and the consequent endlessness of their torment. The curtain is raised for a moment, revealing the anguish of the lost; and then falls, hiding them from our view.

This picture of judgment reveals to us intelligent persons created by God in order that they may share

His endless blessedness, yet, through their own sin and their rejection of salvation from sin, shut out, without hope of return, from the glory and happiness for which they were created.

To this teaching, no objection can be made on the ground of the character of God. It cannot be objected that His purpose will be defeated. For His purpose in creating man was to surround the Eternal Son with created brethren who of their own free will, under temptation to do otherwise, have accepted Him as their Lord. Nor can we object to the doom of the lost on the ground of the justice of God. For, of no one case, are all the facts before us. We know not the greatness of the sins which will be punished by exclusion from the glory of God; and therefore cannot compare the sin and its punishment. The analogy of parental and royal love forbids us to say that the love of God is inconsistent with severe punishment of sin, or indeed with the final exclusion of sinners from the happy family of God. On the other hand, the principles of human justice and the tenderness of human love warn us not to put into the threatenings of the Bible more than its words legitimately convey.

Such is the result of our study of the teaching of the Bible about the Future Punishment of Sin.

Possibly some of my readers will be disappointed that I have not found in the New Testament decisive proof of the endless and essential permanence of human consciousness, and proof that torment enduring throughout an endless succession of ages awaits the

lost. In this direction I have not ventured further than the grammatical meaning, and a careful exposition, of the words of the New Testament reveal a firm ground on which to tread. For, in a subject so profoundly solemn and involving issues so great, it seemed to me better to fall within, rather than go one step beyond, the teaching of Holy Scripture. If I have fallen short, let others supply my deficiency. But they can do so effectively only by expounding the teaching of the Bible.

Others will be still more profoundly disappointed that I have not found some assured mitigation of the punishment threatened to sinners, either in the way of hope of ultimate restoration of the lost to a better life and to the favour of God or at least by silent extinction of a consciousness which will have become an intolerable burden. For such alleviation of punishment we have carefully sought; but in vain. Christ and His apostles, and the Spirit of Inspiration, have not thought fit, as I read their words, to give even one ray of hope for the lost, even the poor hope of endless sleep. And we are left face to face with the fact that the writers of the New Testament agree to teach that the doom of those who persist in refusing the salvation offered by Christ is utter and hopeless and final ruin, but say nothing further about their ultimate state.

Before that vision of ruin, even for the worst of men, all human thought quails. We dare not contemplate the doom of one lost soul. From that

awful vision of judgment, we have sought refuge in the Book of God. But its iron gates of threatening have mercilessly repelled us. Where shall our baffled anxiety turn? To whom shall our thought fly for refuge?

We will fly for refuge, and we shall find refuge, in the infinite love of our Father in heaven, the Creator and Father of us and of all men. The lost are in His hands. No doom will be pronounced on them except through the lips of Him who shed His blood to save from death every child of Adam. No punishment will be inflicted except by His infinite wisdom and love. If I have misinterpreted His purposes, the judge Himself will make no mistake. But His wisdom and our ignorance warn us not hastily to assert what He will do. In speaking of His judgment we must carefully keep our language within the limits of the indisputable teaching of Holy Scripture. And, for a solution of the many difficulties which at present that teaching seems to involve, we must wait till the morning breaks and the shadows flee away. In that day even the punishment of sin will be seen to be a part of the infinite mercy of God. And, in full view of all the facts of the case, our voice will swell the "great shout of much people in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; salvation and glory and power belong to our God: for TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ARE HIS JUDGMENTS."

PART IV

THE ETERNAL GLORY

LECTURE XIX

THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

B^{EYOND} the pictures of judgment painted in lurid colours on the pages of the New Testament rises ever a vision of glory. In 1 Thess. iv. 17, after describing the resurrection of "the dead in Christ," Paul adds, "and in this way always with the Lord we shall be." Still more conspicuously, in Rev. vi. 12—vii. 17, after the dissolution of nature and the wail of the lost, we see a great multitude who have washed their robes and now rest with God. Similarly, in ch. xiv. 1-5, after a vision of a wild beast who claims idolatrous worship from all, we see and hear harpers singing a new song. And, in still more glorious form, after a tremendous vision of judgment in Rev. xx. 11-15, we see in chs. xxi. and xxii. a new heaven and earth, the city of God, and the river of the water of life. This vision of glory, the peaceful goal of all the effort and conflict and weariness and sorrow of

earth, will be the closing scene of our study of the Last Things.

This subject presents difficulties in some respects greater than those involved in the future punishment of sin. It deals with good things unseen by mortal eye, and therefore to us inconceivable. For all our concrete thoughts are shaped by what we have seen and heard. But the matters now before us pertain to a life to come much further beyond our thought than are the cares and joys of manhood beyond the dreams of childhood. And how little a child knows of the inner life of the men and women he sees around him! Yet he knows something: and a boy's imperfect anticipations of manhood have often been a stimulus to persevering effort. So may we hope that, although we be but children looking forward to something of which we know very little, a study of the outlines of glory traced on the pages of Holy Scripture may be to us a guide and encouragement along the narrow path which leads to life immortal.

The first element of the New Heaven and Earth which comes into view consists of the risen bodies of the saved. These must be material forms. For we read (Rev. xx. 13) that the sea and Death and Hades gave up the dead in them. They could give up only that which was in their grasp, i.e. something other than spirit. For the spirits of the saved are already with God. The only meaning we can attach to this surrender is that the bodies which lay dead in the sea and the grave returned to life;

or at least that the spirits of the dead were again clothed in forms analogous to our present bodies. And, if so, these material forms must belong to the new universe then coming into being. Similarly, John v. 28: "all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth."

This use of the term *material* is not discredited by our ignorance of what matter is. For, whatever be their essential distinction, the contrast of mind and matter underlies all human thought and life. These are ever related as the inner to the outer, the higher to the lower: and we cannot doubt that underneath this mental distinction lies objective reality. See p. 102. To speak of resurrection bodies of the saved, is to claim that their permanent condition will be dual, like human life now, consisting of inner and outer, of higher and lower.

This duality of the life of the risen servants of Christ is taught clearly in 1 Cor. xv. 35-49: "How are the dead raised? and with what kind of body do they come? . . . It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruptibility: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown an animal body; it is raised a spiritual body." The phrase *animal* ($\psi\chi\kappa\sigma\nu$) *body* means a body related to the *soul*, the principle of animal life: in contrast to a *spiritual body*, i.e. related to the *spirit*, to that element which man has in common with God. This suggests that all merely animal functions will cease, that the material forms of the risen ones will be completely under control

of the spirit within, a perfect organ for its self-manifestation. And this we must conceive to be the original purpose of the creation of material forms animated by spirit. The resurrection of the body is expressly asserted in Rom. viii. 11, Phil. iii. 21. Thus, by complete control of that which is essentially higher over the lower, the duality of human nature will attain its final and perfect unity.

These material forms imply a material environment. And the prophet who saw the dead standing before God saw also a new heaven and earth, i.e. in addition to the world of spirits, a new material universe. The emphatic repetition of the word *new*, which is used twice in Rev. xxi. 1, “*new* heaven and *new* earth,” again in *v.* 2, “*new* Jerusalem,” and again in *v.* 5, “behold I make all things *new*,” calls attention to the recent creation of the home of the risen ones. Not into an ancient abode, but into a house newly erected, its erection being a new era in the Kingdom of God, will the glorified human children of God be received.

To depict this new and glorious home of the family of God, the prophet uses objects the most beautiful and costly on earth. He sees a city, not rising from earth like those known to us, but coming down from heaven, of immense size, with gates of pearl, streets of gold yet transparent, and foundations of precious stones. So charming is the view that he compares it to a bride adorned for her husband. The bride is the ransomed human race: cp. Eph. v. 27. The pearls and precious stones and gold of

the city are but her jewels. The prophet sees a river of water of life, bright as crystal, going forth from the throne of God. And on both banks of it grows the tree of life, bearing each month a different kind of fruit, and with leaves for healing of the nations. Through this vision, dim with excess of light, we see from far a splendour surpassing human thought.

This vision of material beauty excites inquiry touching the life and joy of the inhabitants of this glorious city of God. This curiosity, the sacred writers have done little to gratify. A few indications are all that we can gather.

One thing however is absolutely certain. Evil of any kind will have no place there. This great deliverance was within the far-reaching view of the prophets of ancient Israel. So Isa. xxxv. 9, 10: "No lion shall be there, nor shall any beast eager for prey go up, they shall not be found there. And the redeemed shall walk: and Jehovah's ransomed ones shall return, and enter Zion with singing, and age-lasting joy on their heads. Gladness and joy, they shall obtain: and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Also ch. ix. 20: "Thy sun shall no more go down, and thy moon shall not withdraw itself; and Jehovah shall be to thee an agelasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

Still more clearly is this absence of evil foretold in the great prophetic book of the New Testament. So Rev. vii. 16: "They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun fall upon them,

nor any burning heat: because the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them, and shall guide them to fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes," Also ch. xxi. 4: "and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes: and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things have passed away."

The vast significance of this absolute escape from all possibility of suffering passes human thought. We are so accustomed to evil mingling with good, and sorrow with every joy, that we are grateful when joy exceeds sorrow. In our greatest joy, we are ever on our guard against reverse. And this possibility of unexpected reverse is no small diminution of our joy. The visions of the Book of Revelation disclose a life undimmed by sorrow or sin or shadow; a rest for the weary which nothing can for a moment disturb.

This rest for the weary need not surprise us. For our Father in heaven is able to protect His children from all evil and to enrich them with infinite good. The sorrow around is due to sin: and the origin of sin lies hidden in the mystery of human personality. But Christ came to save us from sin: and He will save from all sin all who put trust in Him. We need not wonder that those whom, by His own death on the cross, He saves from sin He will also save from all consequences of sin and restore to the full favour of God. The undimmed brightness of the eternal

home of the children of God is but the outshining of His smile.

A favourite phrase, used in each of the Four Gospels, in the Book of Acts, in the Epistles of Paul, and in those of John and Jude, to describe the reward of the righteous, is *eternal* or *agelasting life*: see pp. 133ff, 162f.

A distinguishing feature of *life* wherever found is activity. The normal life of rational beings is intelligent activity. Such must be the state of the glorified children of God.

The word *eternal* or *agelasting* does not, as we have already seen, in itself imply endlessness, but only long duration reaching to the speaker's mental horizon. But the endless life and infinite resources of God forbid us to believe for a moment that He will ever permit His faithful servants to sink into unconsciousness. For, to the blessed, the loss of consciousness would be ruin: and ruin is the punishment of the disobedient. To those shut out from heaven, unconsciousness would be a mitigation of punishment. And some have ventured to hope, although without any warrant in the Bible, that, in the mercy of God, such mitigation may be granted even to those who have rejected the salvation offered by Christ. But, whatever may become of the lost, no one can suggest a reason why God should ever deprive His own children of an infinite blessing. In other words, the nature of the case and the nature of God leave no room to doubt that the life of the glorified will be absolutely endless.

This sure inference is confirmed by Luke i. 33: "of His Kingdom there will be no end." For the continuance of this Kingdom implies continuance of its citizens. In John iii. 16 we read that God gave His Son "in order that every one who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life." This contrast implies that they who put faith in Christ will not perish; as they would do if their life were ever to cease. In John xiv. 19 our Lord says, "because I live, ye also shall live." As divine, His life is endless: such also must theirs be. In 1 Pet. i. 4 the apostle rejoices that his readers have been born again "to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading": or, more correctly, incapable of corruption, of defilement, of decay. This implies the endlessness of their joy. These passages are independent of the word *agelasting*. But further proof is needless. The endless life of God and of Christ involves the endless blessedness of those whom He has ransomed that they may be the beloved Bride of His Son. They who pass through the gates of pearl will go out no more. Before their raptured gaze stretches a vista of endless blessing.

The only materials for further research touching this blessedness are to be found in such pleasures already enjoyed by the servants of God as are not conditioned by the present passing order of things.

Since, as we have seen, the new heaven and earth will be material, we may infer that, then as now, material beauty will be a means of enjoyment. In

the present life, our eyes are frequently gladdened by visible beauty and our ears and hearts enraptured by music. May we not infer that these familiar delights are faint yet real anticipations of eternal beauty and of the songs of the redeemed? This is more than suggested by the beautiful picture of the New Jerusalem, and by the new song of the harpers which none can learn except the redeemed.

To those who know its secrets, a study of nature, of its marvellous and harmonious forces and developments, is an infinite delight; a delight increasing with prolonged study. If the present passing universe is so full of instruction, may we not infer that the new heaven and earth will be still more so? In each case, the material universe is a revelation of the great Spirit who called it into being. And, just as now the devout student reads in nature the name of God, so shall we, throughout endless ages, with ever-increasing clearness, behold the face of God mirrored on the polished stones of the eternal city.

One of the richest joys on earth is loving intercourse with our fellows, and especially with the great and good. This joy of human fellowship must be an anticipation of blessed intercourse not shadowed by parting or discord or defect. And, just as prolonged intercourse unites kindred hearts in ties ever closer and sweeter, making our friends to be our most valued possessions and greatest joy, so may we confidently expect it to be in the great family which will gather in the eternal home of the children of God.

Lastly, above all other joys will be the supreme joy of direct vision of, and immediate personal intercourse with, Christ and God. So, in John xvii. 24, Christ prays, "I will that where I am also they may be with Me, in order that they may behold My glory." At death, as we read in 2 Cor. v. 8, the righteous go to their "home with the Lord." Similarly, Phil. i. 23. In 1 Thess. iv. 17, of the risen servants of Christ Paul says, "always with the Lord we shall be." This was, apparently, his chief thought about the blessedness of heaven. Hence his comparative indifference to other details. This beatific vision is implied in Rev. vii. 15: "they are before the throne of God, and shall serve (or, worship) Him day and night in His temple: and He that sits upon the throne shall spread His tent over them . . . the Lamb shall shepherd them and guide them." So ch. xxi. 3: "the tent of God is with men, and He shall pitch His tent with them: and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them." Consequently, as we read in ch. xxii. 5, "they have no need of light of lamp and light of sun: because the Lord God will give them light." If intercourse with men on earth, imperfect and sinful like ourselves yet worthy of our respect, is so delightful and so elevating, if our present distant vision of Christ by the eye of faith fills us, even amid sorrow, with joy unspeakable and glorious, words and thoughts are lost in the prospect of that nearer vision.

This blessedness is frequently represented, in various figures, as a reward of right-doing and of

sustained effort. Like a racer, Paul was pressing forward to the prize: Phil. iii. 14. At the close of his course he writes, in 2 Tim. iv. 8, "there is laid up for me the crown (or, wreath) of righteousness, which the Lord will give me in that day." So James i. 12: "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; because, having become approved, he shall receive the crown of life which He has promised to them that love Him." Also 1 Pet. v. 3, 4: "patterns of the flock. And, when the chief-shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall obtain the unfading crown of glory."

This reward, like the future punishment of sin, is frequently said to be in proportion to actions done in the present life. So Matt. xvi. 27, "He will give back to each one according to his action:" and almost the same words in Rom. ii. 6. In Luke xix. 16-19, a man who by trading had made ten pounds was made ruler over ten cities; and a man who had made five pounds, over five cities. So 1 Cor. iii. 8: "each one will receive his own reward according to his own toil:" also Rev. xxii. 12, "I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give back to each one as his work is."

Doubtless, as of punishment so also of this proportionate reward, a chief element will be a revelation of the results of actions done on earth. This is suggested in 1 Cor. iii. 13: "each one's work will become manifest. For the day will declare it: because it will be revealed in fire: and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is." A joy unspeakable

is laid up for thousands in the unveiling, in the light of eternity, of the unexpected yet glorious and abiding results of kind words and actions and of patient effort for the spread of the Kingdom of God. And, in its own nature, this reward must be in proportion to faithful effort.

We cannot doubt that this reward and these joys will increase without limit throughout an endless succession of ages. For they are derived from God, by man's knowledge of God. Now God is infinite: and man's knowledge of God must increase through continued intercourse with Him, and through the increasing likeness to Him which continued intercourse cannot fail to produce. This ever-increasing knowledge of God must more and more fill His people with unspeakable joy in God. Now progress intellectual and moral is itself one of the greatest joys on earth. But, just as the student is gaining deeper insight into the matter of his research, his progress is arrested by the hand of death. And the beautiful moral character which has won the admiration and confidence of all is removed. In the city of God progress and the joy of progress will be as lasting as eternity and as unlimited as the fulness of God.

These faint outlines of endless blessing delineate reality. And, if so, all else is real only so far as it bears on this supreme reality. Just as the chief significance and value of the day-dawn is that it is a herald of the day, and of childhood that it may develop into manhood, so the real meaning of life

on earth is that it is the beginning of eternal life. This gives to human life a worth which cannot be overrated. In early childhood, the heir to a throne is unconscious, among his toys and nurses, of the position awaiting him. But, as intelligence opens, his royal lineage and the dignity and responsibilities involved in it dawn upon him; and he begins to look forward to the time when he will wield a sceptre. And only gradually do the children of God see through the disguise which veils the infinite grandeur of their inheritance. But what they already see is sufficient to evoke a hope surpassing far all earthly hope, a hope which is a sure anticipation of eternal reality.

Our study of the Last Things must now close. We have looked as far forward as the materials at our disposal have enabled us. On the one side our vision is darkened by a gloom on which falls no ray of hope. On the other side opens to our view a glory on which falls no shadow, and which even from afar gives rest to the weary.

In that bright vision we see accomplished the creative purpose of God. Before time began, the universe was only a thought, yet definite and wonderful, in the Eternal Mind. In the glorious city of God, that eternal thought will find its complete realisation.

Let us for a moment, from that point of view, review the course of realisation. Out of the unseen, and in the bosom of God, the visible universe sprang

into being. Gradually it assumed definite form. Then life appeared ; and developed through successive stages until at last reasoning man began to ask whence he came and whither he is going. During the successive ages of human history the evolution of society made progress. Amid a people awaiting His coming, the incarnate Son of God appeared. Under the new religious impulse thus given, a further development of the Kingdom of God among men took place. But now, as we stand on the mount of God, this earlier development is complete. The course of human history has run. Its solid platform has gone back into the chaos from which it sprang. But the actors remain : and in them the whole history of the past lives still in its abiding results. From the ruins of a departed universe, a new heaven and earth have risen, never to pass away, and glorious beyond our thought. This visible beauty is an appropriate manifestation of the peace and joy of the myriads who pass through those gates of pearl and crowd the streets of gold. In them and in their intelligent service and love of God and joy in God, the eternal purpose of the Creator has found its perfect realisation. That purpose was, in the mode of its accomplishment, made contingent on man's free action. Its accomplishment has been modified, and seemed to be hindered, by man's sin. It has involved the suffering and death of the Creator Son. But to Him and to the redeemed, suffering and death are now only memories of the past. And the shadow they once cast over Him

and them is now transformed into an abiding and more glorious revelation of God.

“THEY SHALL HUNGER NO MORE, NEITHER THIRST ANY MORE; NEITHER SHALL THE SUN FALL UPON THEM, NOR ANY BURNING HEAT: BECAUSE THE LAMB WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE SHALL BE THEIR SHEPHERD, AND SHALL GUIDE THEM TO FOUNTAINS OF WATERS OF LIFE: AND GOD SHALL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES.”

NOTES

NOTE A. pp. 8, 228.—THE MORAL SENSE.—As witness to an authoritative standard of right and wrong inwoven in the thought of all men, I may quote the following.

In XENOPHON, *Memoirs of Socrates* bk. iv. 4¹⁹⁻²¹ we read, “Dost thou know, said he, Hippias, any unwritten laws? Those in every country, said he, held binding touching the same things. Wouldst thou then be able to say, said he, that men made them? Why, how, said he, could all men come together when they do not speak the same language? Then who do you suppose, said he, has made these laws? I think, said he, that gods gave these laws to men. For with all men it is thought right first of all to reverence gods. Is it then everywhere thought right to honour parents? It is, said he. Also that parents and children do not marry? To me, Socrates, this does not seem to be a law of God. Why? said he. Because I see some, said he, transgressing it. Yes, and many other things they do against law. But then they who transgress the laws made by the gods pay a penalty which in no way man can escape; just as some who transgress laws made by men escape punishment secretly or by violence.”

So DEMOSTHENES, *On the Crown*, p. 317: “Not only will these principles be found in the enactments of the law, but even Nature herself has laid them down in her unwritten laws and in the moral constitutions of men.”

Similarly CICERO, *Laws*, bk. ii. 4: “This, then, as it appears to me, has been the decision of the wisest philosophers, that law was neither a thing contrived by the genius of man, nor established by any decree of the people, but a certain eternal principle which governs the entire universe, wisely commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong. Therefore they called that primal and supreme law the mind of God, enjoining or forbidding each separate thing in accordance with reason. On

which account it is that this law, which the gods have bestowed on the human race, is so justly praised. For it is the reason and mind of a wise Being equally able to urge us to good and to deter us from evil. . . . For even he (Tarquin) had the light of reason deduced from the nature of things, which incites to good actions and dissuades from evil ones ; and which does not begin for the first time to be a law when it is drawn up in writing, but from the first moment that it exists : and its existence is coeval with the divine mind. Therefore the true and supreme law, whose commands and prohibitions are equally authoritative, is the right reason of the sovereign Jupiter."

The above quotations, which are confirmed by the entire literature of the ancient world, reveal a widespread conviction that the principles of morality which underlie and support human laws are universal and of superhuman origin ; and that they are the voice of an authority from which there is no appeal. The intensity and authority of this widespread conviction cannot be an illusion. They thus reveal an objective reality underlying them.

Remarkable confirmation of the same, from the pen of the great apostle of the Gentiles, is found in Rom. ii. 14-16 : " Whenever Gentiles, the men who have no law, do by nature the things of the law, these, not having law, are to themselves a law ; who show the work of the law, written in their hearts, their conscience bearing joint-witness, as do their reasonings among themselves, when accusing or excusing one another." This implies that the Gentiles are to themselves, in virtue of a law inwoven into their own thought, what the sacred books were to Israel ; and that by this inner law they will be judged in the great day. Similarly, 2 Cor. iv. 2 : " by manifestation of the truth commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." This implies that in every one there is an inward faculty to which the truth appeals.

Of modern Christian writers, I may quote BUTLER, *Sermons on Human Nature*, ii. 10, 11 : " There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions ; which passes judgment on himself and them ; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good ; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust ; which, without

being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly. . . . It is by this faculty, natural to man, that he is a moral agent, that he is a law to himself; but this faculty, I say, not to be considered merely as a principle in his heart, which is to have some influence as well as others; but considered as a faculty in kind and in nature supreme over all others, and which bears its own authority of being so." So Sermon iii. 3, 6.

This supremacy by no means implies the infallibility of a man's moral judgments. For the law written in the heart may be misinterpreted by human fallibility, just as much as the law written in the Sacred Books. Still less does it place the authority of the moral sense above that of the Bible. Each of these is supreme in its own sphere, and each recognises the authority of the other. Every one is bound to obey, till better instructed, the voice of conscience. But that in us which is noblest and best pays lowly homage to Christ. Moreover, the voice of Christ both strengthens the authority of the voice within and gives us power to obey it. Indeed, in His followers, the two voices are blended. We cannot distinguish practically between the voice of conscience and that which speaks to us from the Cross and the Throne.

For these reasons the moral sense claims a hearing in theology, and especially in the solemn matter now before us. It is not superseded by, any more than it can override, the authority of Christ speaking to us from the pages of the New Testament. Sometimes these authorities seem to be in conflict. In such cases, we must seek, by patient and reverent attention to each voice, for the harmony which underlies whatever comes from God. This harmony, thus found, is the only absolute authority.

NOTE B, on pp. 14ff., 241ff.—In a thoughtful and interesting volume entitled *The Intermediate State* (Elliott Stock) DR. G. S. BARRETT goes over nearly the whole ground covered by this volume; but with special reference to the Intermediate State.

On p. 9 he dismisses, with too little attention, the theory of the unconsciousness of the dead in the interval between death and judgment. See above pp. 16-18. In chs. ii. and iii., as against the loose popular teaching that the dead pass at once to full reward or punishment, Dr. Barrett proves clearly that the

New Testament teaches a final simultaneous judgment of good and bad, this involving an intermediate state; and adduces passages suggesting that this intermediate state will be one of happiness or misery. In ch. iv. he argues that for those who after a sinful life have turned to Christ shortly before death, and for all men in view of the imperfection even of the best, a longer period is needful for moral development, and that such longer period is needed even for the full development of evil. He then reasons, on p. 46, that, unless there be a further development of character after death, "the great Day of Judgment seems reduced to an unreality, and . . . is merely the formal ratification of a silent judgment which had preceded it ages before." This argument, Dr. Barrett further develops in ch. vi. In ch. vii. p. 85, he argues that "the offer of mercy in Christ must be made to every man either in this life or in that which is to come;" and that therefore, since very many do not receive this offer in life, they must receive it in the unseen world, and before judgment, i.e. in the Intermediate State. He refers also, on pp. 91-93, to those who die in infancy; and mentions, on pp. 95-97, the possibility that the heathen may be judged according to their use of such light as they have.

Much of the above deserves careful consideration. But Dr. Barrett does not refer to Rom. ii. 12-16, where Paul deals specially with the case of the heathen, and declares that they will be judged, "apart from law," by "the law written in their hearts." It seems to me that this inborn moral sense, to which the entire literature of ancient heathenism bears abundant witness, affords, in the case of all who come to mature age, a sufficient basis for a full moral probation. This evidently was Paul's view.

This great passage seems to me to weaken Dr. Barrett's arguments in chs. vi. and vii. But these arguments are needless; for the plain and abundant teaching of the New Testament is sufficient proof of his main point, viz. that judgment will be pronounced not at death, but at a definite time beyond it. The difficulties he raises warn us not hastily to dogmatise on the condition of the departed before judgment.

On the Millennium, the Second Coming of Christ, and the Resurrection of the Dead, Dr. Barrett's teaching is in general harmony with mine.

So is his teaching about the doom of the wicked. But he confounds the words *suffering* and *punishment*; and speaks, on pp. 191f., of the theory he rejects as "the endlessness of punishment." But, as I have proved on pp. 186ff., punishment does not necessarily involve suffering. Dr. Barrett's solemn appeal on p. 211 I commend to all readers.

The whole work deserves careful consideration; and confirms the findings of this volume.

NOTE C, on pp. 16f.—On the Intermediate State, two small volumes entitled *Concerning them that are asleep*, by JOHN FURNEAUX (Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1903) deserve careful attention. He endeavours to prove, from certain references in the Old Testament, and especially from the metaphor of sleep in the Old and New Testaments, that the dead are unconscious and will remain so till the resurrection; and does something to show that the passages usually adduced to prove their consciousness are not decisive. As matter of mere speculation without Biblical authority, and as a timely protest against contrary dogmatic assertion, his theory is worthy of consideration. But the reasons given do not seem to me sufficient for confident assertion. On the other hand, as we saw on p. 17, it lies open to serious objection.

NOTE D, on p. 100.—A conspicuous defender of the Premillennial Advent of Christ is H. GRATTAN GUINNESS, from whom we have two volumes (Hodder & Stoughton) entitled *The Approaching End of the Age* and *Light for the Last Days*, which appeared in the years 1878 and 1886 respectively.

At the beginning of the latter work is a "chronological chart" marking the centuries from B.C. 2000 to A.D. 3000, and dividing this long period into the "Jewish Age," ending B.C. 740, followed by the "Gentile Age," which extends to A.D. 1930, and this followed by the "Millennial Age." Across the centuries are drawn several lines indicating various periods, historic or prophetic, including those given in Dan. viii. 14, xii. 11, 12.

A very curious element in both volumes is thus stated on p. 23 of *Light for the Last Days*: "Astronomy has taught that the great chronometer provided by God for man marks off by its

different revolutions *years of three different lengths*: one measured by the sun, one by the moon, and one by the joint movement of both orbs; the *solar* year, the *lunar* year, and the *calendar* year. They have found by research that God in His word employs in prophecy *all these three years* which He has caused the sun and moon to measure, and that the difference between them, small in a single year, becomes so considerable in longer periods as to have veiled from earlier generations the accurate fulfilment of chronological prophecies." This mode of reckoning enables our author to give to the same number of years three different lengths, according as it is measured by one or other of the above three scales; e.g. on p. 270 of *Light for the Last Days* we find that a period of 1260 years, beginning from A.D. 663, may close at three different times, viz. A.D. 1885, or 1905, or 1923. A method so elastic gives scope for remarkable manipulations of dates.

But surely, in any kind of reckoning, whatever precise length be given to one year, the phrase "1260 years" means 1260 summers and winters, and cannot possibly mean either 1222 or 1242 summers and winters. In all nations and ages, a definite number of years is one definite length of time, and is subject to no variation beyond fractions of one or at most two years. This strange suggestion, for which (see *Light for the Last Days* p. 24) the writer claims credit, and which is a corner stone of both volumes, does much to discredit both.

In each volume Mr. Guinness asserts strongly that the Millennium will be preceded by the visible and bodily coming of Christ for which His early followers were waiting. In support of this assertion, he gives in *Light for the Last Days*, on pp. 460-480, five arguments. These we shall now consider.

"1. The doctrine that a still future millennium will precede the second advent of Christ was never broached in the Church for 1600 years." This sweeping statement ought to have been supported by quotations from early Christian writers. None are given. It is discredited by an admission (on p. 465) that "the Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries were anti-millennarian, but not post-millennialists." For this implies that they did not hold Mr. Guinness's view. And in these centuries lived nearly all the greatest writers of the early Church. This want of unanimity robs the testimony of early Christian writers of any decisive authority in the controversy before us.

The next argument is: "2. A millennium previous to the coming of Christ is nowhere mentioned in Scripture; nowhere, either in the Old or New Testament, can these two events, the millennium and the second advent, be found in this order. They are very frequently mentioned together, but always in the reverse order, first the advent, then the millennium." But on p. 56 of *The Approaching End*, etc., we read: "The broad fact that there is to be a reign of Christ and His saints on earth is not new. . . . But that it should be introduced by a binding of Satan, that it should last a thousand years, these facts, dimly intimated elsewhere, are revealed here *for the first and only time.*" In other words, the "Millennium" is mentioned in the whole Bible only in Rev. xx. 1-7. And it is there followed by a great revolt, by the appearance of Christ upon a throne, by the resurrection and judgment of the dead, and by dissolution of nature; features associated in many other passages of the New Testament with the Second Coming of Christ. The only quotations from the Bible in support of this second argument are Dan. vii. 14, 27, which refer evidently, not to a limited reign followed by rebellion, but to the eternal Kingdom of God. We are told that "The Church is to be a little flock, like sheep among wolves, to the end. . . . It was foretold that the greater part of the Church would become apostate, and continue so to the end of the age. . . . The entire interval is filled up with events which altogether preclude the possibility of a millennium." For these statements no proof is given. Although, in the Bible, we read little about the general progress of the Gospel, there is nothing to contradict such progress. On the other hand, in Matt. xiii. 33 it is compared to leaven "hidden in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened." This suggests unobtrusive, but all-pervading and complete, victory.

Another argument is given on p. 474: "3. The predictions of antichrist prove the same order. It is evident that antichrist is to be destroyed by the coming of Christ, as is distinctly stated in 2 Thess. and elsewhere. Now St. Paul says in that same passage that the mystery of iniquity which would eventuate in the production of antichrist was already working in his own day, and would continue so to do until it culminated in his revelation, and that he would be destroyed only at the epiphany; hence the entire interval from apostolic times to the second

advent of Christ is filled up by the growth, culmination, decay, and destruction of the great apostasy headed by antichrist." But that the mystery of iniquity was working in Paul's day and that at a future time the lawless one was to be "revealed," does not disprove the binding of Satan for a long period before this revelation of evil. Of such long period of rest we have no indication in Paul's letters. But it is equally true that we have no indication whatever that the coming of Christ so frequently mentioned and described in the New Testament will be followed by a great apostasy: and the possibility of such apostasy is shut out by its plain and abundant teaching.

The only other arguments are: "4. It will be contrary to every analogy of the past, in the entire history of the human race, if this Christian age were to go from good to better until it blossomed into the millennium. All previous ages have gone from good to bad, and ended in abounding iniquity, which brought down judgment, and was followed by a fresh departure." Also, "5. The present state of things in the world confirms in the strongest way the conviction that the millennium will never be introduced by existing agencies prior to the coming of the Lord." It is true that in Rev. xx. 1 the Millennium is attributed to an extraordinary putting forth of divine power. But this may be without a visible and bodily coming of Christ. Indeed, His first coming was not conspicuous. Himself said, "The Kingdom of God comes not with observation." In this respect the preliminary stages differ from the one final manifestation. Mr. Guinness says, on p. 476: "nothing that exists or ever has existed since the fall has held fast its perfection or progressed from a lower to a higher platform; and if the present state of things were to improve into the millennium, it would form an abrupt and startling contrast to every analogy of the past." But indisputably such progress from a lower to a higher platform took place both at the Reformation and at the Methodist Revival. And the wide-spread and permanent blessings which followed reveal in each of these events the hand of God. So it may be again, and on a still larger scale. Moreover, even the Millennium will be followed by a terrible revolt. It will not "hold fast its perfection."

A radical and serious error in Mr. Guinness's books and theological standpoint, as of nearly all books on the same side, is

an underestimate of the infinite benefits already wrought by the Gospel, and of the infinite power of God operating therein.

To the very serious objection involved in the unlikeliness of the intermingling of mortal men with others raised from the dead to die no more, Mr. Guinness replies, on p. 515 of his later work, by referring to the angelic intercourse recorded in the Bible. But these angel visits were few and far between, made only to a few devout persons; and therefore did not interfere with the ordinary course of human life. But the intercourse involved in the premillennial theory would change completely the whole aspect of human life and probation.

To the other serious objections set forth in Lect. viii., Mr. Guinness gives no reply.

In the *Approaching End of the Age* pp. 53, 59, in order to prove that Rev. xix. 11 describes the foretold Second Coming of Christ, Mr. Guinness asserts that the vision of the white horse and its rider describes an event subsequent to the marriage feast in vv. 7, 9. But, as I have proved in Lect. vii., the visions in the Book of Revelation are not always consecutive. In this case, the incident mentioned in v. 10 separates the verses which follow from those which precede it. And it is impossible to conceive that the Hallelujahs of vv. 1-7, which far surpass anything in ch. xx. 4-6, will be followed by the great conflict described in ch. xix. 11-21. The Bridegroom will never leave the marriage feast to go forth again to fight.

Instead of interpreting what he admits to be the only passage in the Bible which mentions the Millennium in the light of the abundant and harmonious teaching of the rest of the New Testament, Mr. Guinness distorts the rest of the New Testament in order to bring it into harmony with this one passage. So *Approaching End* p. 73 : "Without further revelation we should doubtless have understood them (i.e. many passages which seem to teach that good and bad men will be judged at the same time) to teach a simultaneous judgment; *with* further revelation, we can read them as broad comprehensive statements, made by One who *knew*, but did not at the time wish to *reveal*, modifying details." He attempts to justify this method of exegesis by saying that the Apocalypse is a later revelation of the will of God; and compares the case of an admiral who receives first a general, and afterwards a more specific, command. But we

have no proof that the Book of Revelation is the latest document of the New Testament. Modern scholarship suggests that probably it preceded the Fourth Gospel by some twenty-five years.¹ Indisputably this last and the First Epistle of John contain the maturest thought of the New Testament.

Moreover, no admiral would set aside abundant personal directions in deference to a later written command unless the meaning of this last was open to no doubt. We have seen in Lect. vii. that the one passage on which Mr. Guinness relies does not require the meaning he gives to it. It is therefore utterly unsafe as a foundation for a doctrine not found, as he admits, elsewhere in the Bible.

How seriously, in deference to his interpretation of this one passage, Mr. Guinness distorts the plain teaching of the New Testament, we see on pp. 61-79 of his earlier volume. He supposes that the dead whom the sea and Death and Hades will give up, as described in Rev. xx. 13, will not include the martyrs and others described in v. 4. He speaks of them (see p. 70) as "criminals coming to receive their doom. . . . Their destiny is the lake of fire." He denies that one of the redeemed will stand before that throne of judgment; and divides the dead into two classes—those who rise before the Millennium to life eternal, and those who will rise after it and perish. This is in flat contradiction to Rev. xx. 12, 15, where we read that the book of life will then be opened, and that "if any one was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." For these last words imply clearly a discrimination in this last judgment. Moreover, if only those raised before the Millennium be saved, what will become of those born during the thousand years of blessing? The theory sinks under the weight of its own absurdity.

How irreconcilable is Mr. Guinness's theory with the recorded teaching of Christ, we see in his treatment (on p. 74) of the solemn vision of judgment in Matt. xxv. 31-46. This he persists in calling a "parable." But a parable involves a comparison: and we have no comparison here. In spite of many conspicuous features in common, he endeavours to show "that the scene here described is not identical with that in Rev. xx." His only

¹ See the very good "Introduction" in the volume on the Book of Revelation in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools*.

reasons are that the one is "an award only," the other "an investigation;" the one speaks of "all the nations," the other of "the dead small and great;" in the one "the wicked are condemned *en masse*, on the negative ground of what they have *not* done," in the other, "as individuals, on the positive ground of what they *have* done, 'the things written in the books.'" He adds, "If this parable does describe a judgment of the dead, (which is most unlikely,) then we are compelled by the later revelation to apply to it the same rule as to the first class of passages, and to conceive that our Lord presented the judgment as a great whole, and was purposely silent as to the interval between its two stages."

Similar violence is inflicted on Matt. xiii. 39-43, 49, and on the great passage in John v. 29. In Lect. vii. I have already shown that the interpretation advocated by me involves no such violence even to the one passage in deference to which Mr. Guinness distorts so many others.

The strongest point in Mr. Guinness's argument is his reference to the total silence of the rest of the New Testament, even when foretelling the coming of Christ, about the long period of blessing foretold or implied in Rev. xx. 1-6. He argues not unfairly that so long a period of blessing, postponing the return of Christ, could not have been passed over in silence by Christ and His apostles. The seriousness of this difficulty, I do not deny. But a difficulty quite as serious besets the only alternative, viz. to break up into two parts separated by a long interval the last judgment so frequently described in the New Testament. The absence of reference to the Millennium in passages which speak of the Second Coming of Christ is not more remarkable than its total absence from Rev. vi., where a series of visions trace the course of events up to the final judgment of the wicked and the endless rest of the redeemed. Take it as we will, Rev. xx. 1-6 presents an insoluble difficulty. But this difficulty is not lessened by Mr. Guinness's suggestion, which, as we have seen, throws into confusion the harmonious teaching of the rest of the Bible.

Our author endeavours to prove that the coming of Christ is near. See *Light for the Last Days* pp. 366-392. "We have six separate and distinct sets of signs, each sufficient by and of itself alone to indicate that we are on the verge of the establishment on earth of the eternal Kingdom of the Son of Man—that blessed

reign of righteousness and peace, of which the millennial sabbath is only the portal and introduction. We have : I. Political signs. II. Ecclesiastical signs. III. Jewish signs. IV. Mohammedan signs. V. General social signs. VI. Chronological signs." These curiosities of argument do not merit serious discussion here. But they do serious harm by suggesting that the Christian hope rests on no better foundation than this.

Mr. Guinness does not suggest why, unlike all other prophetic numbers, the "thousand years" denote exactly a thousand historical years.

NOTE E, on p. 100.—In a work entitled *Parousia* (Unwin), J. STUART RUSSELL, M.A., endeavours to prove that all the prophecies in the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of all men, and the dissolution of nature, were fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. On p. 82, in a note on Matt. xxiv. 29-31, he says, "We may go further than this, and affirm that it is not only appropriate as applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, but that this is its true and exclusive application. We find no vestige of an intimation that our Lord had any ulterior and occult signification in view." His argument is that Christ foretold that He would come during the lifetime of some of His hearers ; that no other event in that generation, except the fall of Jerusalem, can be identified with His coming ; and that therefore unless He referred to this event His solemn words have fallen to the ground. So on p. 548, in a summary of the work : "As the result of the investigation we are landed in this dilemma : either the whole group of predictions, comprehending the destruction of Jerusalem, the coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead, and the rewarding of the faithful, did take place before the passing away of that generation, as predicted by Christ, taught by the apostles, and expected by the whole Church ; or, else, the hope of the Church was a delusion, the teaching of the apostles an error, the predictions of Jesus a dream." This argument he repeats again and again throughout the whole work.

The destruction of Jerusalem was undoubtedly "a day of Jehovah," in the sense in which, as we saw in Lect. iii., that phrase is used in Joel ii. 1 and elsewhere frequently in the Old Testa-

ment. For this great catastrophe was a conspicuous punishment, after much longsuffering, of the nation which had consummated previous disobedience by the murder of Christ. But nowhere else is the abundant and definite teaching of the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ placed in relation to the destruction of Jerusalem except in Matt. xxiv. and its parallels in Mark and Luke. And even here the two events are easily distinguished. In Matt. xxiv. 3 the disciples ask Christ about the time of the destruction of the temple and about the sign of His coming and of the completion of the age. But this question does not imply that the fall of Jerusalem was identical with the coming of Christ. The two events are clearly distinguished in v. 29, where Christ says that "immediately after the affliction of those days" shall be the darkening of the sun and moon, His own appearance coming on the clouds, and the gathering together by the angels of His chosen ones from one end of heaven to the other. For this immediate sequence by no means implies identity. And nothing happened at the capture of Jerusalem which can, by the wildest stretch of imagination, be described by the language used in vv. 29-31.

The only passage in which there seems to be any actual blending of the fall of Jerusalem with the coming of Christ is Matt. xxiv. 27, where Christ supports an exhortation about the earlier event by a reference to the latter. But this reference is found only in the First Gospel, where the early return of Christ is much more conspicuous than elsewhere in the New Testament.

The vision of judgment in Matt. xxv. 31-46 contains no reference whatever to the destruction of Jerusalem, and has nothing in common with it. But it is forced into the iron shoe which Mr. Russell has invented. He understands (on p. 105) "all the nations" to mean "all the nations of Palestine, or all the tribes of the land." And, stranger still, he gives the same meaning to the same phrase in Matt. xxviii. 19, "make disciples of all the nations." He supposes (see p. 112) that the terrible words "depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" were heard only in the unseen world, unheeded by the nations of the earth and unrecorded by human historians. And, while we wonder at this strange exegesis, our author falls upon us, as with a sledge-hammer, and says, on p. 113: "We are placed, therefore, in this dilemma—either the words of Jesus have failed, and the

hopes of His disciples have been falsified ; or else these words and hopes have been fulfilled, and the prophecy in all its parts has been fully accomplished. One thing is certain, the veracity of our Lord is committed to the assertion that the whole and every part of the events contained in this prophecy were to take place before the close of the existing generation."

In reference to John v. 28, 29, vi. 39, 40, 44, xi. 24, xii. 48, Mr. Russell says, on p. 126 : " Since our Lord Himself distinctly and frequently places that event within the limits of the existing generation, we conclude that the Parousia, the resurrection, the judgment, and the last day, all belong to the period of the destruction of Jerusalem."

The same treatment is extended to 1 Thess. i. 10, ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 15-18, v. 2-11, 2 Thess. i. 6-10, ii. 1, 8. He supposes that Paul comforts the mourners at Thessalonica by reminding them that a catastrophe is at hand which will submerge the Jewish state, and that then, in some invisible manner, the dead in Christ will rise and His living servants be caught up to meet Him in the air. Since this resurrection is in 1 Thess. iv. 14 compared to that of Christ, we ask whether after the fall of Jerusalem the graves of the dead Christians were found empty as was His grave on the third day ; and how it was that the rapture to heaven of all the followers of Christ in Macedonia, Greece, Rome, and elsewhere, including the apostle John, made no break in the continuous history of the Church on earth.

The same method is applied to 1 Cor. xv. The description of the bodies of the risen ones given in vv. 35-49 is scarcely referred to. But Mr. Russell supposes (v. 51) that the "last trumpet" sounded 1800 years ago. Unfortunately, so far as we know, no one heard it. All hesitation is banished (on p. 211) by the familiar argument : " Right or wrong, the apostle is committed to this representation of the coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the transmutation of the living saints, within the natural lifetime of the Corinthians and himself. We are placed therefore in this dilemma—1. Either the apostle was guided by the Spirit of God, and the events which he predicted came to pass ; or 2. The apostle was mistaken in this belief, and these things never took place."

The teaching in Rev. xx. 1-10 about the Millennium is a serious difficulty to our author. For he is compelled to say, on p. 523 :

"The result of the whole is, that we must consider the passage which treats of the thousand years, from *v.* 5 to *v.* 10, as an intercalation or parenthesis. The Seer, having begun to relate the judgment of the dragon, passes in *v.* 7 out of the apocalyptic limits to conclude what he had to say respecting the final punishment of 'the old serpent,' and the fate that awaited him at the close of a lengthened period called 'a thousand years.' This we believe to be the sole instance in the whole book of an excursion into distant futurity: and we are disposed to regard the whole parenthesis as relating to matters still future and unfulfilled." This confirms my statement on p. 78 that Rev. xx. 1-6 contains teaching not found elsewhere in the Bible.

After dropping out of the consecutive order *vv.* 5-10, Mr. Russell joins on, at the close of *v.* 4, the tremendous vision of judgment in *vv.* 11-15. But, strange to say, he supposes that this judgment has already taken place, i.e. that earth and heaven have already fled from the face of Him who sits on the throne. On p. 525 he writes: "If the judgment scene described in this passage be identical with that in Matt. xxv., it follows that it is not 'the end of the world' in the sense of its being the dissolution of the material fabric of the globe and the close of human history, but that which is so frequently predicted as accompanying the *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰώνος*,—the end of the age, or termination of the Jewish dispensation."

In other words, our author asks us to believe that the great event for which the early Christians were waiting, and for which we still wait as the goal of our highest hopes, took place in A.D. 70 in some sort of invisible connection with the fall of the Jewish state. He does this because only thus can he interpret a few passages in the Synoptic Gospels, and especially in the First Gospel, which seem to assert or imply that Christ would return to judge the world during the lifetime of some of His hearers. Like Mr. Guinness, but with much greater violence, he sacrifices the abundant and plain teaching of the New Testament to a small portion of it.

The above theory is an attempt to remove a real difficulty in the New Testament, viz. the expectation expressed in a few passages that the return of Christ for which His early followers were waiting would take place during the lifetime of some of His contemporaries. But the explanation suggested is impossible.

For it involves a violence to the plain grammatical meaning of a great part of the New Testament which would destroy the meaning of language and throw open to doubt the most definite assertions. Relief from an acknowledged difficulty cannot be purchased at this price.

NOTE F, on p. 100.—Very different from the above is a scholarly volume by DR. MILLIGAN on *The Revelation of St. John* (Macmillan), in which, after calling attention to the difficulties which make impossible the theory of a premillennial advent, he suggests that “the thousand years,” and the “little time” which follows them, do not denote duration in time, but only the idea of completeness. He interprets these periods as simultaneous, and as each co-extensive with the whole Christian dispensation, during which he supposes that, in reference to the saints, Satan will be completely bound, but in reference to others in some measure free. So on p. 210: “The fundamental principle to be kept clearly and resolutely in view is this, that the thousand years express no period of time. Like so many other expressions of the Apocalypse, their real is different from their apparent meaning. They are not to be taken literally. They embody an idea; and that idea, whether applied to the subjugation of Satan or to the triumph of the saints, is the idea of *completeness*. Satan is bound for a thousand years—i.e. he is completely bound. The saints reign for a thousand years—i.e. they are introduced into a state of perfect and glorious victory.”

On p. 213, when expounding Rev. xx. 3, “after these things (Satan) must needs be loosed a little time,” Dr. Milligan calls attention to ch. vi. 11, “they should rest yet for a *little time*, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, which should be killed even as they were, should be fulfilled.” This “little time” he correctly understands to be “the whole Christian age;” and then goes on to give to the same phrase the same extension of time in ch. xx. 3. He says, “when it is said Satan shall be loosed ‘for a little time,’ the meaning is that he shall be loosed for the *whole Christian age*.” In other words, two periods of time, one called “a thousand years” and the other “a little time,” which are expressly said to be consecutive, and are contrasted, Dr. Milligan takes as simultaneous, each embracing the

whole Christian age ; and, with strange inconsistency, as denoting not periods of time, but only the idea of completeness.

It is quite true that symbols must not be interpreted literally. But, unless there be definite relation between the objects symbolised and the symbols, these last are useless. Unless the phrases before us denote periods of time, they are meaningless. The only examples in support of his strange and unlikely method of interpretation which Dr. Milligan brings are Ezek. xxxix. 9, where we read that, after the destruction of Magog, the inhabitants of the cities of Israel will for seven years burn the weapons of the conquered and will need no other fuel ; and v. 12, where we are told that the house of Israel will be for seven months burying the slain of Gog and purifying the land from the presence of their corpses. These examples are no proof whatever that in symbolic language longer or shorter periods of time may denote merely greater or less completeness. For in this case the greatness of the overthrow is proved by the length of time during which the captured weapons lasted for fuel and the length of time required to bury the dead. On those easily explained examples, in one chapter of the Old Testament, Dr. Milligan builds up a most incongruous method of exposition.

Moreover, to say that Satan is bound, "in order that he may not deceive the nations any more until the thousand years are completed," as we read in Rev. xx. 3, and then to say, as we read in v. 8, that at the same time he will "go forth to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth," is flat contradiction.

The great difficulties involved in the interpretation of the Millennium given in this book of mine, I admit ; and shall welcome a better solution. But I prefer to leave unexplained these ten verses of the most difficult book of the Bible rather than admit principles of interpretation which would leave open to doubt the plainest assertions of Holy Scripture.

NOTE G, pp. 208-218.—On the Immortality of the Soul, I may quote DR. LAIDLAW's admirable book (T. and T. Clark, 1879 and 1895) on *The Bible Doctrine of Man*. In Lect. vi. he discusses "Man's nature and a future life." On pp. 309ff. we read, "During most of the Christian centuries the Scripture doctrine concerning the life to come has been held as bound up with and

based upon that of the indestructibility of the human soul. Man is a being who must live after death, must live for ever. Conscience declares that present conduct and character are to influence an eternal hereafter. Nay, the very make of the soul tells of the timeless and changeless sphere to which it belongs. The doctrine of the natural and necessary immortality of the human soul has been religiously cherished as of the very essence of the scriptural or Christian belief in a life to come. . . . More cautious Christian opponents of the prevailing method of identifying divine revelation as to a future life with the tenet of the soul's indestructibility have preferred to rest the doctrine of survival on the resurrection of Jesus and the affirmations of Scripture, without insisting on the soul's natural immortality. . . . The Bible does not affirm the immortality of the soul in any abstract or general form. Much less does it define the constitution of the soul as involving its necessary indestructibility. So much we may freely concede." This last is a most important concession. Throughout the volume Dr. Laidlaw does not appeal to the Bible in proof of the popular doctrine of the endless permanence of all human souls. Nor does he assert plainly that he accepts this doctrine.

The writer continues : " But when it is said that the notion of a separable soul or spirit in man is unscriptural, is nothing but a philosophical figment, and that the soul's separate existence is no necessary part of Christian belief, we are prepared on the strongest grounds to demur. . . . The personal existence of human beings after death is a doctrine that pervades the whole system of Scripture. The Bible sustains and illuminates, in the most remarkable and varied ways, man's instinctive belief that he was made for an everlasting existence. . . . It would be wrong to import into these terms (*breath* and *spirit*) the metaphysical idea of an indissoluble substance, and thus commit the Scripture to the philosophical argument that the soul cannot die because it cannot be dissolved or dissipated. But the author of the Book of Wisdom seems to be fairly following the doctrine of Genesis when he says that 'God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of His own peculiar nature.'" With all this I heartily agree.

Dr. Laidlaw then (on p. 314f.) distinguishes between "the Bible mode of affirming man's future existence and the methods of other religions and philosophies," especially that of Plato,

"which has such close affinities with scriptural doctrine as to have been greatly identified with Christian eschatology, elaborated by the schoolmen as the foundation of the faith, and often preached from the Christian pulpit as a substitute for the fuller light of the gospel on life and immortality." So on p. 318 : "Gradually, in Christian schools, the Greek influence prevailed, and even in the Christian Church the idea of the soul's immortality for long took the place of the Scripture doctrine of a future life." In other words, our author admits, as is proved by me on p. 208f., that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was derived from Plato.

Dr. Laidlaw writes, on p. 325, "This theory of 'conditional immortality,' or of the ultimate annihilation of the wicked, may claim one advantage over its rival, the theory of universal restoration. In its appeal to the certainty of future punishment and to the irrevocable character of future destiny, it is somewhat more in accordance than the other with the findings at once of conscience and of Scripture. But both theories are incompetent solutions of the awful problem which they attempt. It is obvious that neither of them can be made to consist with the whole doctrine of Scripture as to the future of man." But the writer does not discuss the traditional theory of the endless suffering of the lost, nor does he give his own interpretation of the teaching of the Bible about the doom of the wicked.

Dr. Laidlaw has not ventured expressly to contradict the popular doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul—i.e. of the endless permanence of all human souls; but in his book he has done much to discredit it. For he asserts or implies that it has no place in the Bible, and therefore does not belong to "the Bible doctrine of man"; and that it was derived from Plato, and differs from the teaching of the New Testament. He evidently rejects it as destitute of adequate proof. Moreover, while rejecting, as not taught in the Bible, the theory of conditional immortality, he does not quote any passage in the Bible as contradicting it.

NOTE H, on p. 223.—A very careful and accurate grammatical study of the doom of the wicked is found in a work entitled *The Hereafter*, by JAMES FYFE (T. and T. Clark, 1890), who

unfortunately was taken from us soon after it appeared. It is a most useful collection of facts bearing on the case. Elaborate lists are given of all passages in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures in which occur the words describing the doom of the wicked : and with great care the writer investigates their meaning. But his grasp of the subject as a whole is much less satisfactory than his treatment of verbal details. He does not escape from serious ambiguity in his use of the word *immortality*, giving to it sometimes its Biblical meaning and sometimes its meaning in the writings of Plato and Cicero. He asserts the endless separation of good and bad ; but says little or nothing to prove the endless permanence of the bad. He does not use the traditional language about the excruciating agony of the lost ; but he does not protest against it. His answers to objections against the doctrine he advocates do not touch the supreme difficulty of the endless permanence of evil ; of which he seems to be unconscious.

On the same side must be placed a scholarly and useful volume on *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality* by Dr. S. D. F. SALMOND, whose recent loss we deplore: 4th ed., T. and T. Clark, 1901. This phrase, he takes (Pref. to 1st edition) "in the large sense which Paul gives it ;" adding, in partial agreement with Lect. xvi. of this volume, "Life, eternal life, the immortality of the man, not the immortality of the soul, is the message of the Bible, alike in Old Testament and in New, in Christ and in apostle, in John and in Paul."

Dr. Salmond reproduces and discusses with learning and ability the beliefs of savage tribes and of the ancient world about life beyond the grave ; and contrasts with these, and expounds, the teaching of the Old Testament. This is followed by the teaching of Christ, the general apostolic doctrine, and the Pauline doctrine. Under these heads he discusses the teaching of the New Testament about the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection and judgment of the dead, and their final destiny.

This exposition of the teaching of the Bible, though good so far as it goes, does not cover the whole ground. A serious defect is the absence, except one slight reference on p. 311, of any exposition of the important passages which compare the doom of the lost to destruction of vegetable matter by fire, e.g. Matt. iii. 12, xiii. 40, John xv. 6, Heb. vi. 8. And we have

no adequate treatment of the passages, e.g. Phil. iii. 19, which speak of *destruction* as the *end* of the ungodly.

In the last division of the work we have an able chapter on "The Contribution of Christianity to the Hope of Immortality." This is followed by chapters on "Annihilation and Conditional Immortality" and on "Restorationism and Allied Doctrines." These are unsatisfactory. The objections to the doctrine of annihilation are only general observations about the nature of man and the work of Christ and similar topics, with a reference to Matt. xxv. 46, Mark iii. 29, John iii. 36, Acts i. 25, of which the last two passages are altogether irrelevant. On p. 525 our author says, "The doctrine of Restorationism fails, though not with the same measure of failure, as the dogma of Conditional Immortality." He thus differs from Dr. Laidlaw, see p. 285. Why Dr. Salmond calls one a *doctrine* and the other a *dogma*, he does not tell us. This last term is a very good one if properly used. But I think that it should be reserved for formulated statements of doctrine claiming to be received not so much for argument adduced as for the authority which asserts it. If so, none of the theories before us can be called dogmas. Apparently the term is used by Dr. Salmond and by some other writers to express peculiar dislike to the doctrine thus designated. But we have seen, on p. 237 f., that this so-called dogma does not contradict the N.T. nearly so directly as does the theory of universal salvation. The Biblical testimony against universalism is not stated in its full force in this volume.

Having rejected these two theories, Dr. Salmond devotes the last chapter of his work to "The Alternative Doctrine." He says, "What remains but to recognise that the voice of Scripture and the judgment of reason are, each with its own measure of clearness, on the side of the last of the three possible Christian answers to the great question of the final issues of man's life?"

But he does not say clearly what this last answer is. Does he refer to the traditional teaching of the endless torment of the lost in material fire? Or does he accept the modern theory of endless suffering without torment? He does not tell us. Indeed, with the exception of two short sentences which assert the superiority of the theory of restorationism to that of conditionalism, almost every word in the chapter might be accepted by Mr. White. Whatever theory Dr. Salmond accepts, he accepts

it apparently merely as an alternative to the theories he rejects. For he gives scarcely any argument in support of his own belief. But, before we accept an important and tremendous doctrine on this negative ground, we must have absolutely decisive disproof of all alternatives : and we must have absolute, proof that the doctrine we accept is the only possible other alternative. Dr. Salmond has not so much as referred to the strongest argument from the Bible, i nproof of the annihilation of the lost, viz. the passages which compare their doom to the destruction of vegetable matter by fire ; although he has done something to overturn some other arguments in favour of it. But, to overturn arguments in favour of a doctrine, does not necessarily disprove the doctrine itself. And our author has done little or nothing to prove that the doctrine of annihilation is contradicted in the Bible. This defect of proof leaves open another alternative which our author has not discussed, viz. that the ultimate fate of the lost is not precisely defined in the Bible. The very serious objections, stated in Lect. xvii. of this volume to the doctrine of the endless suffering of the lost, Dr. Salmond passes over in complete silence.

This failure to grapple with the great issues involved in the questions in hand is, in my view, a fatal defect in this able and useful work.

Another serious defect is that in a work on "The Christian Doctrine of Immortality" the author does not discuss the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul which for fifteen centuries has dominated Christian thought. In the preface (see above, p. 286) he seems to repudiate this popular doctrine in favour of Paul's teaching on Immortality. But on p. 487 he quotes with approval a writer who says that "the notion of a soul immortal enough to live through death, but not immortal enough to live for ever, is too childish to be entertained beyond the little school of literalists who delight in it." Again, on p. 497, he asks : "If man is not inherently immortal, why should the sinful man subsist at all after death ?" The answer to this question is easy. God has decreed that, whatever a man sows, this he shall also reap. And, because for this reaping there is not space in the present life, He has decreed that after death comes judgment, this last involving conscious existence at least for a time. But this moral necessity for the survival of the wicked affords no

proof or presumption that they will abide for ever in suffering. For, though we can see a moral necessity for judgment after death, we can conceive no moral ends to be served by endless permanence of evil in this awful form, an irremovable blemish on the rescued and glorified universe of God. Certainly the above suggestion is not absurd. It has been vindicated as legitimate by not a few modern theologians who cannot be dismissed as "childish."

An all-important point in Dr. Salmond's book is that while evidently disliking the doctrine of the ultimate extinction of the wicked, and apparently favouring the traditional doctrine of the endless permanence of all human souls, this involving endless suffering of the lost, he does not state plainly his own belief. Certainly he brings no proof from the Bible or elsewhere for the popular doctrine of the immortality of the soul. He thus affords strong presumption that it is not taught there, and that it does not rest on any reliable evidence.

NOTE I., on p. 232.—The theory of universal restoration is advocated in a thoughtful volume by ANDREW JUKES on *The Second Death and the Restitution of All Things*, which appeared in A.D. 1867, and has since been frequently reprinted.

The writer quotes the passages, noted by me on pp. 141, 171, 190, which seem to assert the final ruin of the lost ; and adds, on p. 21, "Words could not well be stronger. The difficulty is that all this is but one side of Scripture, which in other places seems to teach a very different doctrine." He then quotes other passages which assert the universality of God's purpose of salvation ; and goes on to say, on p. 25, "Now is not this apparent contradiction,—few finding the way of life, and yet in Christ all made alive,—God's elect a little flock, and yet all the kindreds of the earth blessed in Abraham's seed,—mercy upon all, and yet eternal punishment,—the restitution of all things, and yet eternal destruction,—the wrath of God for ever, and yet all things reconciled to Him,—eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and yet the destruction through death, not of the works of the devil only, but of him who has the power of death, i.e. the devil,—the second death and the lake which burneth with fire, and yet no more death or curse, but all things

subdued by Christ, and God all in all. What can this contradiction mean? Is there any key, and if so, what is it, to this mystery?"

This key, Mr. Jukes thinks he has found. On p. 27 he says, "The truth which solves the riddle is to be found in those same Scriptures which seem to raise the difficulty, and lies in the mystery of the will of our ever blessed God as to the process and stages of redemption:—

"(1) First, His will by some to bless and save others; by a first-born seed, 'the first-born from the dead,' to save and bless the later-born:—

"(2) His will therefore to work out the redemption of the lost by successive ages or dispensations, or, to use the language of St. Paul, 'according to the purpose of the ages':—and

"(3) Lastly, His will (thus meeting the nature of our fall) to make death, judgment, and destruction the means and way to life, acquittal and salvation; in other words, 'through death to destroy him that has the power of death, that is the devil, and to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage'."

Under the above three heads, Mr. Jukes gives "The teaching of Scripture, as to the destiny of the human race." The first assertion we need not deny. But, in the total absence of express Bible teaching, it affords no presumption whatever that God will actually save, through the agency of those who believe in Christ, all who now reject the salvation offered by Him. The second assertion is a very narrow foundation for hope that in subsequent successive ages God will work out the salvation of those condemned on the last day. And, thirdly, that God saves men through the death of Christ, is small ground for expectation that the second death of those cast into the lake of fire will be to them a "means and way to life."

Under the second assertion, Mr. Jukes transliterates the word commonly rendered *eternal* (see p. 132) into *æonial*; and correctly emphasises its relation to the word *age* or *ages*. But this last word is indisputably temporal, denoting a period of time with a unity of its own, and is appropriately used of any such period. But our author puts into it another significance, and on p. 65 interprets "eternal life" to be "a life, the distinctive peculiarity of which is, that it has to do with a Saviour, and so is part

of a remedial plan." That this last idea is no part of the meaning of the word *eternal* is evident from its use, quoted on p. 137 of this volume, to describe ancient ruins.

After thus discussing "the teaching of Scripture," or rather after weaving the scheme of salvation embodied in the above three propositions, Mr. Jukes considers "popular objections." Of these, the most serious is that his doctrine "is opposed to Scripture." He sets aside, however, at once all passages which speak of the destruction of those who reject Christ, on the ground, stated under prop. 3, that this destruction is the way to salvation. The writer then discusses Matt. xii. 32, John iii. 36, Mark ix. 42-50, Matt. xxv. 46, xxvi. 24, Luke xvi. 26. But he omits all reference to the passages which compare the doom of the lost to the destruction of vegetable matter by fire.

The strongest points in the book are its merited rebukes of the over-statements of popular theology. But the writer seems to me to have done nothing whatever to prove his main point, viz. that the writers of the Bible teach that all men will ultimately be admitted into the blessedness of the children of God.

DR. SAMUEL COX, for ten years editor of *The Expositor* and well known as author of an excellent commentary on Job and other works, published in A.D. 1877 a volume entitled *Salvator Mundi*: and this was followed in A.D. 1883 by a booklet entitled *The Larger Hope*. On p. 23 of the former work he protests against certain popular opinions which he thus states: "These dogmas, which happily are losing force daily, and daily moving through a lessening circle, are,—that there is no probation beyond the grave; that when men leave this world their fate is fixed beyond all hope of change; that if, when they die, they have not repented of their sins, so far from finding any place of repentance open to them in the life to come, they will be condemned to an eternal torment, or, at least, to a destructive torment which will annihilate them."

The positive teaching which Dr. Cox would put in place of the above is fairly represented by another extract from p. 189: "Meanwhile, the purpose of God standeth sure. It is His will, His good pleasure, that all men should be saved by being led, through whatever correction and training may be necessary for that end, to a full and hearty recognition of the

truth ; which truth will be testified to them in its appropriate seasons, and by appropriate methods, in the ages to come, if it has not been brought home to them here : so apparently and so forcefully testified that at last they will no longer be able to withstand it, but will heartily betake themselves to the Father against whom they have sinned, and submit themselves to His righteous will through the Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus." Still more plainly on p. 11 of *The Larger Hope* : "While our brethren hold the redemption of Christ to extend only to the life that now is, and to take effect only on some men, we maintain, on the contrary, that it extends to the life to come, and must take effect on all men at the last." In other words, the writer expects the ultimate salvation of all men.

In support of this expectation Dr. Cox appeals to the Bible, with the limitation (see *Salvator Mundi* p. 24) that "he who has drawn a conclusion from Scripture which reason and conscience imperatively condemn should need no other proof that he has misinterpreted the Word of God." In his appeal to the Bible, Dr. Cox excludes, as not decisive, the Old Testament, because written in the twilight of an earlier covenant ; and the Book of Revelation and the parabolic language of the Gospels, on account of the difficulty involved in the interpretation of figurative modes of speech. But he points out, not unfairly, that these excluded parts of Holy Scripture contain passages, e.g. Luke xiii. 21, xv. 4, which seem to support his main contention. The great need for caution in the interpretation of figurative language, I have already admitted. And it will be noticed that in the foregoing expositions I have relied upon it only so far as it confirms the plain language of other parts of the New Testament. To the unique authority of the inborn moral sense of man, I have, especially on p. 226ff., paid profound respect. But our interpretation of its judgments in special cases is very apt to be warped by personal consideration. Its judgments may sometimes justly demand a reconsideration of historical and documentary evidence. But, taken alone, they are an uncertain foundation for positive teaching.

In proof that all men will at last be saved, Dr. Cox appeals to the many passages, discussed in Lect. xii., which assert that God's purpose of salvation embraces all men. This argument assumes that all God's purposes will eventually be accomplished

in all men. And this assumption I cannot accept. Certainly I cannot make it a basis of further argument. For all around us to-day God's will is effectively resisted by His creatures. And the creation of creatures capable of resisting even for a moment the will of their Creator is a mystery so profound that we dare not affix limits to the extent to which He will permit that resistance to go. It is quite conceivable that God, after committing to man the awful prerogative of choosing his own path, may make the final destiny of each dependent on his own choice. The argument before us assumes that this final decision has been withheld. Of this we have no proof.

Dr. Cox supports his general contention by asserting (on p. 205 of *Salvator Mundi*) that "the punishment of the unrighteous is at once retributive and remedial"; suggesting that all punishment of sin is designed to save the sinner. And the tenor of his book implies clearly that in all cases the design will be accomplished. That this is the design of the punishment to be inflicted in the great day, he endeavours to prove by appealing to the significance of the Greek word *κόλασις* in Matt. xxv. 46, "they shall go away into eternal punishment." That this appeal is unsafe, I have on p. 185 attempted to prove. In human punishment, reformation of the person punished is not the only aim. And we have no right to say that it is the only aim of the punishment threatened by God to those who reject the salvation offered by Christ.

We now ask, How does Dr. Cox deal with the passages which seem to assert or imply the ultimate ruin of the unrepentant? The most decisive of these passages he passes over in total silence. Of those which assert that destruction or something equivalent is the *end* of sinners, he makes no mention. We have no exposition of Phil. iii. 19, "whose end is destruction"; of 2 Cor. xi. 15, "whose end shall be according to their works"; of Heb. vi. 8, "whose end is to be burnt"; of 1 Pet. iv. 17, "what will be the end of those who disobey the Gospel?" Nor have we any reference to the solemn words of Christ recorded in Matt. xxvi. 24, Mark xiv. 21, "good were it if that man had not been born." Dr. Cox calls attention, on p. 133 of *Salvator Mundi*, to the purifying effect of fire. But he has not noticed that those cast into the fire on the day of judgment are never described as metals which are refined by fire, but frequently

(see p. 170) as vegetable matter, which is never purified, but always utterly and finally destroyed, by fire.

On the other hand, Dr. Cox discusses at length the words *damnation*, *hell*, *eternal*, and shows that they have not the meanings sometimes attached to them. The word *damnation*, as being a mistranslation, I have not found needful to discuss. For the word *hell*, the Revised Version substituted *Hades* and *Gehenna*. The latter of these words I have discussed on p. 178f. of this volume.

For the word *aiώνιος*, rendered *eternal*, Dr. Cox accepts Mr. Jukes's transliteration *æonial*; and gives to it practically the same meaning. Strange to say, Dr. Cox gives to the words *eternal* and *everlasting*, which are nearly always renderings of the same Greek word, two different meanings. He says, on p. 98 of *Salvator Mundi*, "We must not take the words 'eternal' and 'everlasting' as synonymous or equivalents. The one indicates that which continues through the whole of duration; the other, that which is out of duration and above it, of which the measures and sequences of time are no necessary part. The one expresses *quantity*, the other *quality*. 'Everlasting' denotes that which lasts for ever; 'eternal,' that which is spiritual and divine." Of this last assertion, our author gives no proof. And it is disproved by the occasional use of the word thus rendered, especially in the LXX., to describe objects, e.g. Leviathan in Job xli. 4, which are neither spiritual nor divine.

The volume entitled *Salvator Mundi* opens with a quotation of our Lord's words recorded in Matt. xi. 20-24: "If the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they had long ago repented in sackcloth and ashes." Dr. Cox points out, fairly, that this implies that influences tending to repentance had been brought to bear on Capernaum which had not been brought to bear on those earlier cities; and argues that the men of Tyre cannot be lost simply because God withheld from them advantages given to Capernaum. In this I heartily agree. But the writer goes on to infer, on p. 17, that there must be for the cities of the Plain a probation beyond the grave. This inference I cannot admit. We have no right to say that, if there be no probation after death, all the inhabitants of Tyre or even of Capernaum will be condemned in the great day. For, as is plainly taught by Paul in Rom. ii, 12-16, the law written on the

hearts of all men is a standard by which all men will be judged : and we can well believe that judgment will be measured according to the moral advantages or disadvantages of each. And, if so, inequality of advantage affords no presumption of a future probation. The argument of Dr. Cox is valid only against those who teach that none will be received into the city of God except those who on earth have definitely and consciously accepted the salvation offered by Christ.

In his *Larger Hope* Dr. Cox brings as an argument for the ultimate salvation of all men the fact that the ancient prophecies seemed to announce temporal dominion for Israel ; and from this infers, not unfairly, that the truth sometimes lies not on but under the surface of Holy Scripture. He thus endeavours to weaken the force of the passages which assert, or seem to imply, the ultimate destruction of the wicked. This argument warns us that the meaning which lies on the surface is not always the correct one. But it does nothing to prove that a meaning which lies on the surface is necessarily or probably false, or that a meaning which does not lie on the surface is probably true. This "new argument" is merely an appropriate warning against hasty and confident generalisations from the words of Holy Scripture.

This warning is followed by an interesting "New Testament illustration." In 1 Cor. v. 3-5 Paul pronounces on an immoral church-member an extreme and apparently final sentence. The guilty one was to be "handed over to Satan for destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." But as we learn from 2 Cor. ii. 5-8, he was afterwards forgiven and restored. From this, Dr. Cox infers that there may be ultimate pardon for some against whom has been passed what seems to be a final sentence.

This example proves that underneath the judgments of God may be an unexpected reserve of mercy. And this proof I gladly welcome. But, like the foregoing argument, it is only a warning against confident assertion touching the doom of the unsaved. It does very little to support Dr. Cox's main assertion. We notice also that in Paul's condemnation there is express mention of ultimate mercy for the condemned. But for those condemned in the great day we find, throughout the New Testament, no ray of hope.

The two volumes just noticed add little to our knowledge of

the mysterious topic which they discuss. They protest against certain popular misinterpretations and exaggerations. But against these they set up a doctrine contradicted by the clear and abundant teaching of the New Testament.

NOTE J, on p. 232.—From the eloquent pen of DEAN FARRAR we have two volumes on the subject before us entitled *Eternal Hope and Mercy and Judgment*, published, in the years 1878 and 1881 respectively, by Macmillan.

In the preface (pp. xv.-xxi.) to the former work Dr. Farrar refuses, somewhat reluctantly, to assert that all men will be saved, and rejects also "the theory of Conditional Immortality" and "the Roman doctrine of *Purgatorij*." And he protests against "the common, the popular view in our own Church." This popular view he states on p. 17 of his second work, specifying four points :

"1. That the fire of 'Hell' is material, and that its agonies are physical agonies.

"2. That the doom of 'everlasting damnation' is incurred by the vast majority of mankind.

"3. That this doom is passed irreversibly at death on all who die in a state of sin.

"4. That the duration of these material torments is necessarily endless for all who incur them."

Against the first two of these four statements, I join in Dr. Farrar's protest. We have already seen that in the most conspicuous New Testament passages the word *fire* is certainly metaphorical. The only passage which, so far as I remember, speaks of the relative proportion of saved and lost is Matt. vii. 13, 14 : "many are they who go in thereat . . . few that find it." And this speaks only of those who in Christ's day were already in the way of life as compared with the mass of mankind who were treading the path of sin, not of those who will ultimately be saved. Throughout the Bible we find no safe foundation for a general statement about the proportionate final doom of men.

The third assertion to which Dr. Farrar objects I am not prepared to defend. For he explains "a state of sin" to be "a state in which there have been no visible fruits of repentance." That all such will be lost I am by no means ready to assert.

Dr. Farrar refers appropriately to boys and others, not manifestly pious, cut off suddenly by death. To discuss the fate of such persons, is altogether beyond our power. The Gospel was given, not to enable us to pronounce sentence on our neighbours, but to show us the path of life. On the other hand, it is very unsafe to make their case, about which we know so little, a basis of argument. It is quite conceivable that to them the Righteous Judge may give a just award apart from any probation beyond the grave.

The fourth opinion again mentions "material torments," which I have already disavowed as going beyond the teaching of the Bible. The phrase "torments necessarily endless" also goes beyond anything found in Holy Scripture.

In other words, Dr. Farrar protests and argues against teaching which in this volume I have repudiated.

The positive teaching of the volumes before us is thus stated on p. 178 of *Mercy and Judgment* :

"1. I cannot but fear, from one or two passages of Scripture and from the general teaching of the Church, and from certain facts of human experience, that some souls may be ultimately lost ;—that they will not be admitted into the Vision and the Sabbath of God.

"2. I trust that by God's mercy, and through Christ's redemption, the majority of mankind will be ultimately saved.

"3. Yet, since they die unfit for heaven—since they die in a state of imperfect grace—I believe that in some way or other, before the final judgment, God's mercy may reach them, and the benefits of Christ's atonement be extended to them beyond the grave."

In reference to these assertions, I remark that not "one or two passages," but, as I have shown, the teaching of several writers of the New Testament and of Christ as His words are there recorded asserts or clearly implies that some will be "ultimately lost." Of the relative proportion of saved and lost, we know nothing : and speculation is useless. Nor do we know anything about what takes place in the mysterious interval between death and judgment. But I must again protest against the assertion or suggestion, reiterated by Dr. Farrar and others, that the only hope for those who die "unfit for heaven," or "in a state of imperfect grace," is in a probation beyond death. It

seems to me that, to every one of ordinary intelligence who comes to years of maturity, life presents a fair test of character and therefore an adequate probation. And this is implied in important teaching of Paul. But the result of this probation is often not visible on earth.

A real service rendered by Dr. Farrar's books is that they compel us to contemplate the significance of teaching prevalent in the Church during long ages and even to our own day. With righteous indignation he quotes the terrible words of honoured teachers, words which have no sufficient justification in Holy Scripture and which carry with them their own condemnation. By quoting these words, he has done not a little to prevent their repetition. He has also, in his later volume, gathered together a mass of useful information about the opinions held by various writers ancient and modern on the future punishment of sin.

Soon after Dr. Farrar's *Eternal Hope*, a reply to it appeared by DR. PUSEY entitled *What is of faith as to Everlasting Punishment?* The writer has little difficulty in exposing certain incautious statements and indecisive arguments in the book to which he replies. But he adds very little positive teaching. And positive teaching, supported by adequate evidence, is the only effective reply to error.

At the same time, Dr. Pusey has gathered together much interesting information about the teaching both of the Jews and of the early Christians touching the future punishment of sin. Unfortunately his translations are not always accurate : e.g. on p. 153 he mistranslates Polycarp as speaking of "the perpetual torment of eternal fire," instead of "fire of eternal punishment": *αιωνίου κολάσεως πῦρ*. See *Ep. of Church of Smyrna* ch. xi.

Dr. Pusey's suggestion, on p. 12, of salvation by repentance at the last moment of life seems to me most dangerous. No one can limit the mercy of God ; but it is in the last degree unlikely that a lifelong rejection of Christ may be atoned for by a momentary turning to Him when death is inevitable and close at hand. Any theory which needs such support is thereby discredited.

It is worthy of note that on p. 91 Dr. Pusey quotes a Jewish Rabbi as saying that "the Mishna brings before its tribunal

certain individuals and certain generations, against whom it pronounces a sentence of condemnation, devoting some to annihilation, and others to endless sufferings." This implies that the Jews did not, as many have said that they did, hold universally the endless permanence of the human soul and the endless suffering of the lost.

The book is little more than a useful collection of interesting quotations, which need to be carefully verified. It contributes very little to the elucidation of the final destinies of men.

NOTE K, on p. 236.—In A.D. 1846 appeared a volume by the REV. EDWARD WHITE entitled *Life in Christ: Four Discourses upon the Scripture Doctrine that Immortality is the Peculiar Privilege of the Regenerate*. The writer opposed the popular doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and endeavoured to prove that the Bible teaches expressly that the end of the wicked will be final cessation of consciousness, preceded by actual suffering in proportion to the guilt of each. After a long interval, this was followed in A.D. 1869 by a scholarly and thoughtful pamphlet entitled *The Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, by the REV. H. CONSTABLE, M.A., advocating the same theory. It has been several times reprinted. In A.D. 1875 Mr. White published a new work entitled *Life in Christ: a Study of the Scripture Doctrine on the Nature of Man, the Object of the Divine Incarnation, and the Conditions of Human Immortality*. Of this work a third and enlarged edition (Elliott Stock) appeared in A.D. 1878.

These writers and many others who follow them repudiate the final restoration of all men: and they differ from all the writers mentioned above in that they reject the popular theory of the immortality of the soul, or, more correctly expressed, the essential and endless permanence of human consciousness. Their own theory is commonly known as "Conditional Immortality." It asserts that the ultimate permanence of human consciousness depends upon the man himself.

In support of his main contention, Mr. White appeals to the word *destruction* frequently used in the New Testament to describe the doom of the lost; to the teaching of Christ, so abundantly recorded in the Fourth Gospel, that God gave His

Son to die in order that all who believe in Him may not perish or be destroyed, but may have eternal life ; and to other similar teaching elsewhere in the New Testament. From this he rightly infers that they who reject the salvation announced by Christ and received by those who believe will be excluded from eternal life and be *destroyed*. This last word he interprets to mean extinction of consciousness. Upon this meaning turns a great part of his argument. He also assumes, or endeavours to prove, that loss of life eternal involves ultimate loss of consciousness.

The only proof, so far as I can see, adduced by Mr. White for the meaning he wishes to give to the Greek word rendered *destroy* when used in the New Testament to describe the doom of the wicked is its use in several passages quoted by him from the *Phædo* of Plato, and denoting undoubtedly the extinction of the soul. He then argues that the same word cannot mean both extinction and endless misery.

The word never means either the one or the other, but, as I endeavoured to show on pp. 122-132, utter and hopeless ruin. At the same time, both extinction and endless misery are forms of ruin, and may be so described. But, if so, the peculiar form of ruin must be otherwise specified. This, Plato does in the passages quoted in the volume before us. He shows clearly in the first quotation what sort of ruin he has in mind. See quotation on p. 126. To guard against misunderstanding, Plato says in a second quotation : "Herself (the soul) *be destroyed and come to an end.*" So in the third : "Are we to suppose that the soul . . . if this be her nature and origin, is *blown away and perishes* immediately on quitting the body, as the many say ?" This apparent repetition proves that to Plato the word rendered *destroy* or *perish* was not in itself sufficient to convey the idea of extinction, but needed to be supplemented by other less ambiguous terms. And in the passages from various Greek authors of various ages quoted on p. 125 of this volume, the context makes equally clear that the destruction referred to was not extinction, but only ruin. This common use of the word, also its frequent use even in the N.T. as a synonym for natural death, by writers who did not look upon death as extinction, and its frequent use to describe an object lost but not injured, Mr. White has not discussed.

The only other argument in support of Mr. White's main

position, or rather another form of the same argument, is the frequent teaching, in the Fourth Gospel and elsewhere in the N.T., that eternal life is contingent on faith and well-doing. This argument implies that the absence of life involves absence of existence or at least of permanent existence. But of this, Mr. White gives no proof. It is useless to say that existence is an essential element of the idea of life. For the absence of the whole by no means implies absence of each of its essential elements. The absence of one of them negatives the presence of the whole. If, as I have endeavoured to show, life beyond the grave includes both consciousness and blessedness, the loss of blessedness is loss of life, even though the unblessed one continues consciously to exist.

Thus fails, in my view, Mr. White's main argument. Throughout his interesting and able volume I find no proof of the ultimate extinction of the wicked except that contained in "the plain meaning" of two Greek words. And that this is their plain meaning, i.e. the only one they fairly admit, is disproved by their use in classical Greek and in the Greek Bible.

Our author is more successful in his disproof of the popular doctrine of "the immortality of the soul." And by disproving it, and thus calling attention to a popular error, he has done good service. The strongest point of the volume is its protest against the exaggeration and distortion of the teaching of the Bible not unfrequently found in popular theology, and especially in some popular sermons. On behalf of such distortion and exaggeration, I have nothing to say. But I think that the exaggerations are somewhat exaggerated by Mr. White. Certainly, the present generation has witnessed a great improvement in this matter. To this we may hope that his volume has contributed. But, while protesting justly against popular misrepresentation, he has, in my opinion, read into the words of the New Testament a sense going beyond the thoughts of its writers.

The foregoing is a very imperfect account of Mr. White's interesting volume. He endeavours to prove that man was not at his creation endowed with endless consciousness, but that this was made contingent on his obedience; and that after man had sinned, Christ died in order to give back to him the endless permanence thus lost. With this theory I

have dealt only so far as it bears on the future punishment of sin.

The tremendous moral objections to the theory of endless torment and the moral bearing of his own theory are given with great eloquence and force by Mr. Constable, in chs. ix. and x. of his work.

NOTE L, on p. 236.—A more recent work in support of the theory of the ultimate extinction of the lost is an interesting and able book entitled *The Problem of Immortality*, by Dr. E. PETAVEL of Lausanne, published in French in two volumes which appeared in December 1890 and December 1891 respectively, and, as one volume, in an English translation in A.D. 1892. Occupying the same standpoint as Mr. White, the writer naturally goes over the same ground. But this later work has independent value as a thoughtful restatement of the case.

Dr. Petavel mixes together and identifies two distinct issues, viz. the essential immortality of the soul and the ultimate extinction of the lost; and accepts as proof of the latter every disproof of the former. He asserts correctly that the Bible never teaches the essential permanence of the human soul, and that in the New Testament life beyond the grave is always reserved for the righteous. From this he incorrectly infers that the lost will ultimately sink into unconsciousness. He thus falls into the common fallacy of accepting lack of proof as proof to the contrary. In this volume I have endeavoured to show that the writers of the N.T., while using language which asserts or implies that some will be finally shut out from the glory of heaven, do not define in unmistakable language what their fate will be. This alternative position, which is certainly worthy of consideration, Dr. Petavel ignores. Evidently he supposes that, by disproving popular error, he has restored the true teaching of Holy Scripture.

This lack of well-grounded positive teaching is a serious defect. Instead of investigating the meaning of the word *destruction* Dr. Petavel assumes that it denotes something equivalent to annihilation, and claims in support of his doctrine all sorts of passages in which the word occurs, even where there is no in-

dication that it means extinction. He thus claims for an ancient Greek word associations of thought derived from the modern theological use of its French and English equivalents. This is, as I have shown, an abundant source of error in theology. Only by careful research can we reproduce the sense which ancient writers intended their words to convey. This philological research is lacking in the volume before us.

As some compensation for this serious defect, we find, towards the close of the volume, a "Philological Study of the Meaning of the Greek Verb *ἀπόλλυμι*," by a very able Greek scholar, DR. WEYMOUTH, author of *The Resultant Greek Testament*. He admits, on p. 492, as asserted by me on p. 123 of this volume, that in Homer the dead are said to be *destroyed*; although "in many instances" this word "is used where the existence of the departed is expressly recognised." His only explanation is that "the Greek mind did not reckon the existence of the disembodied spirit as existence at all." But Homer represents the dead as still speaking and bewailing their lot and as recognising friends; and gives no hint that they will ever sink into unconsciousness. This proves that extinction of consciousness is no part of the meaning of the word with which he frequently describes their lot. Between a worthless existence such as Homer describes and non-existence is an infinite difference. And if the dead, who are supposed to be still conscious of their misery, are said to have been *destroyed*, without any suggestion of their ultimate extinction, we have no right to say that the destruction of those who reject the Gospel involves their extinction.

On p. 490 Dr. Weymouth meets an objection based on passages at the beginning of *The Clouds* of Aristophanes in which a man says that he is sinking unto ruin (literally "I am being destroyed," or, "am perishing") and then that he is already ruined (literally "this calamity has destroyed me") by the wastefulness of his son; and does so by saying that the father was dying of terror for fear of the money lender. But this is not suggested in the context. The fear of the money lender is merely a presage of coming ruin. Of the father's approaching death there is no hint. In this sense of ruin, the word is very common with Aristophanes, occurring in *The Clouds* not less than twenty times, in most cases without any suggestion even of bodily death. In lines 856f. it denotes the *loss* of a cloak, reminding

us of the *lost* coin in Luke xv. 8. The cloak and coin were *lost* even though some one else had found, and were using, them. To this common use of the word, in which it cannot denote extinction, Dr. Weymouth scarcely refers.

Another passage quoted by him is l. 683 of the *Hecuba* of Euripides, where she says, bewailing the death of her last surviving son, "I am *lost*, a wretched one, no longer do I exist." Yet indisputably she was existing and conscious. This case proves that under strong emotion the Greeks sometimes used language about existing persons which denotes literally non-existence. Similarly, we sometimes speak, without any thought of extinction, of a man "putting an end to his existence." But frequently, without any emotion, as a matter of ordinary discourse, the Greek word rendered *destroy* is used to describe death, even by writers who, like Homer, believed that the dead are still conscious. This proves that to them the word did not convey the idea of extinction, actual or ultimate.

On p. 494 of Dr. Petavel's volume Dr. Weymouth finds "an amusing slip" in my logic when I expound (in *The Expositor* for January 1890, reprinted on p. 129 of this volume) the assertion that Ulysses *lost* his companions and ship by saying that "to him they were virtually non-existent." But I readily admit that annihilation is a kind of destruction and may always be so described. What I say, and what Dr. Petavel, supported by Dr. Weymouth, denies, is that it is not the only form of destruction; that the word *destroy* does not always mean to reduce to non-existence. Moreover "virtually non-existent" is very different from actual non-existence. The words of Homer do not necessarily assert that Ulysses' ship was actually non-existent. If it had been cast on a desert shore and rescued and repaired by natives, it would still have been, from Ulysses' point of view, *lost*, i.e. to him virtually non-existent: for he would still be without ship and companions. This common use of the word, to denote anything lost, Dr. Weymouth has not discussed.

Dr. Petavel claims (as does Mr. White) at some length (on pp. 229-245) that the earliest Christian writers held the doctrine which he advocates. But, in the passages he quotes, the early writers merely reproduce the language of the New Testament without expounding its meaning. They do not, so far as I have

been able to verify his quotations, use language which asserts clearly, as do the opinions repudiated by Plato and quoted on p. 126 of this volume, that the lost will fall into unconsciousness. But Dr. Petavel seems to me correct in saying that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, involving endless torment of the lost, gained its prevalence in the Church through the great influence of Augustine. See above, on pp. 217, 231.

By calling attention to an erroneous doctrine, the advocates of what they incorrectly call "conditional immortality" have rendered no small service. But, not satisfied with proving that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not taught in the Bible, they have gone on to assert, as taught in the Bible, another doctrine, viz. the ultimate extinction of the lost, almost equally destitute of Biblical support.

NOTE M, on p. 245.—Nearer to the position taken up in these lectures is a small volume on *Future Punishment* by Dr. Clemance. The author enumerates and then discusses four theories ; viz. (1) Universal Restoration, (2) Annihilation, (3) Absolute Endlessness of Suffering and Sin, (4) his own opinion, viz. that "in Scripture the duration of Future Punishment is left indefinite": see p. 62. By this last assertion I understand Dr. Clemance to mean that the Bible is quite definite about the finality of future punishment, but leaves open a possibility that the lost may sink into unconsciousness. Of these theories he says on p. 19, "We do not accept *the first*, for it seems to us *against* Scripture; nor *the second*, for it *distorts* Scripture; nor *the third*, for it *goes beyond* Scripture." Of these judgments, the first and second are supported by arguments most able and, as I think, most conclusive. Dr. Clemance's defence of the third judgment is little more than an exposition of the meaning of the word rendered *eternal*, an attempt to show that it conveys the idea, not of absolute, but only of relative, endlessness ; i.e. of a beginning or end beyond the writer's view. With this judgment the teaching of this volume is in substantial agreement.

On p. 53 Dr. Clemance strongly condemns "a tremendous assertion of Moses Stuart's, which ought never to have been made ; viz. 'If the Scriptures have not asserted the endless punishment of the wicked, neither have they asserted the endless

happiness of the righteous, nor the endless glory and existence of the Godhead.' " This assertion implies that we have no proof of the endless existence of God except the few passages which speak of the agelasting punishment of sinners. But see above, on p. 168f. Foolish statements like this, made without thought in order to prove a point, have done incalculable harm by bringing Theology into contempt. Dr. Clemance's warning to keep well within the teaching of Holy Scripture is certainly salutary.

Our author has, it seems to me, himself gone beyond these limits when, on p. 16, he asserts that "no human spirit reaches the crucial point of its probation till it has come into contact with the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ for acceptance or rejection." This statement implies a probation beyond the grave for those who in this life have not heard the Gospel. But no proof of the above statement is given. It rests entirely on the assumption that apart from the Gospel there can be no satisfactory test of human character. But I have already shown, on p. 242, that the ordinary circumstances of life, taken in connection with the law written on the hearts of all men, afford to all who come to years of maturity a most searching and impartial test of character. We have therefore no need to seek a probation beyond the grave. It is right to say that Dr. Clemance mentions a future probation only by way of suggestion. As not taught in the Bible, he refuses to assert it : see p. 76. But it is involved in the fundamental principle quoted above. In proof that probation is not necessarily endless, and that it does not necessarily always lead to amendment, Dr. Clemance appropriately quotes Luke xiii. 9, "If it bear fruit, well ; if not, cut it down."

NOTE N, on pp. 218, 245. In close agreement with the teaching of this volume, and of deepest interest, are chs. i.—v. of Part II. of GLADSTONE'S *Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler*, Clarendon Press, Smaller Ed., 1896.

The writer calls attention to the two meanings, mentioned above on p. 213, of the phrase "immortality of the soul" ; and points out, on p. 142, that Butler's argument "is a plea not for immortality, properly so called, but for persistence of life as against the special occasion of death." Lower down we read :

"There are those who say these two things, survival and immortality, are but one: and who seem to suppose that the case of surmounting death is like that of obtaining a passport which will carry us over the frontier of some foreign country; where, this once done, we have no other impediment to apprehend. But, on such an assumption of the identity of survival with immortality, it is to be observed that it is a pure assumption, and nothing more. We have no title to postulate *in limine* that powers, which may be so adjusted or equipped as to face the contingency of death, must therefore be in all respects such as to be certain of facing with a like impunity every other contingency which, for aught we know, the dimness of the future may enfold in its ample bosom. Such questions may remain open, and without prejudice for independent discussion."

Mr. Gladstone denies strongly, and again and again—in this denial agreeing with me on p. 218 of this volume—that the Bible ever teaches, in the proper sense of the phrase, the immortality of the soul. On p. 197f. of his work we read: "Another consideration of the highest importance is that the natural immortality of the soul is a doctrine wholly unknown to the Holy Scriptures, and standing on no higher plane than that of an ingeniously sustained, but gravely and formidably contested, philosophical opinion. And surely there is nothing as to which we ought to be more on our guard, than the entrance into the precinct of Christian doctrine, either without authority or by an abuse of authority, of philosophical speculations disguised as truths of Divine Revelation. They bring with them a grave restraint on mental liberty; but what is worse is, that their basis is a pretension essentially false, and productive by retribution of other falsehoods.

"Under these two heads, we may perhaps find that we have ample warrant for declining to accept the tenet of natural immortality as a truth of Divine Revelation."

This and similar testimonies are of utmost value. For so well-read and careful a scholar as the writer undoubtedly was would not commit himself to a statement which might be overturned by a single quotation from the Bible.

Also very interesting is Mr. Gladstone's account of the "History of Opinion" on the subject before us. He denies that the immortality of the soul was taught in the earliest age of the Church.

On p. 184 we read : "The secret of this mental freedom, the condition which made it possible, was the absence from the scene of any doctrine of a natural immortality inherent in the soul. Absent it may be termed, for all practical purposes, until the third century ; for, though it was taught by Tertullian in connexion with the Platonic ideas, it was not given forth as belonging to the doctrine of Christ or His Apostles. . . . It seems to me as if it were from the time of Origen that we are to regard the idea of natural, as opposed to that of Christian, immortality as beginning to gain a firm foothold in the Christian Church.

"And now, indeed, in connexion with that great name, it may be thought that we are no longer entitled to speak of moderation and reserve as characteristic of the prevailing tone of Christian thought. The opinion, for which he is now most generally known to have been finally condemned, is that which is called Restorationism or Universalism ; an opinion which harmonizes with, and perhaps presupposes, the natural immortality of the soul. But the idea of restoration was only one amidst a crowd of his notions, all of which had the natural immortality of the soul for their common ground."

On p. 188f. we read : "It seems indisputable that the materials for the opinion that the soul is by nature immortal, whether we call it dogma or hypothesis, were for a long period in course of steady accumulation ; though this was not so from the first. After some generations, however, the mental temper and disposition of Christians inclined more and more to its reception. Without these assumptions it would be impossible to account for the wholesale change which has taken place in the mind of Christendom with regard to the subject of natural immortality. It would be difficult, I think, to name any other subject connected with religious belief (though not properly belonging to it) on which we can point to so sweeping and absolute a revolution of opinion : from the period before Origen, when the idea of an immortality properly natural was unknown or nearly hidden, to the centuries of the later Middle Ages and of modern time, when, at least in the West, it had become practically undisputed and universal."

The great influence of Augustine, mentioned by me on p. 217, is also admitted. On p. 191 our author says, "It seems, however, to be generally felt that the determining epoch in the history

of seminal Christian thought upon this subject was the life of St. Augustine, together with that period, following closely upon it, when the Western Church became rapidly imbued with his theology in almost its entire compass."

Attention is called to the fact that the future punishment of sin was never discussed in the four great councils of the early Church, and that no reference is made to it in the great historic formula now known as the Nicene Creed. Evidently it was not considered an essential part of the doctrine of Christ. On p. 195 we read, "The doctrine of natural, as distinguished from Christian, immortality had not been subjected to the severer tests of wide publicity and resolute controversy, but had crept into the Church, by a back door as it were ; by a silent though effective process ; and was in course of obtaining a title by tacit prescription."

On p. 199 Mr. Gladstone expresses his regret that the solemn subject of the future punishment of sin, so prominent in the New Testament, is losing its place in the modern pulpit ; and attributes this to the over-statements so common in popular teaching on the subject, and to a natural revolt from them. With all this I heartily agree. Many have refrained from preaching on the subject because they cannot accept and teach the popular theology, and they know not what to put in its place. To supply this need is a chief part of the purpose of this volume of mine.

Throughout the work its venerable author strongly opposes Universalism. He shows with great force that it flatly contradicts the plain teaching of Holy Scripture ; and that it is out of harmony with what we know of the Divine government. On p. 223 we read : "It is remarkable that this scheme does not present the prospect of a plan for a reformation of character, with a cessation of penalty as its natural consequence ; but it is rather a repeal or exhaustion of penalty, with reformation of character set in the shade, and playing a secondary part : at the very best a reformation brought about arbitrarily, and in defiance of all known laws. And those stern denunciations of Holy Scripture, which on a long course of trial have been found none too strong for their purpose, it is deliberately sought to relax by promising to every sinner of whatever inveteracy, audacity, and hardness an endless period of immunity of suffering ; after

a period spent in it, which they have no means of defining, and which every offender is therefore left to retrench at his own pleasure, on his own behalf."

On the other hand, Mr. Gladstone refuses to admit, as taught in the Bible, the endless suffering of the lost. On p. 215 we read : "When the souls of the wicked are declared to have destruction or death for their doom, the meaning, as is alleged, is firstly that they will survive, secondly that they will survive for ever, and, thirdly, that they will survive under a double condition : the one, that of continual persistence in wickedness, and, the other that of a co-extensive, and also never ending, immersion in suffering. There appears to be presented here a good deal of difficulty ; so much of difficulty, at least, as may serve to recommend a certain amount of reserve. I do not here venture on any assertion." Again, on p. 259 : "How much do we know of the lot of the perversely wicked ? They disappear into pain and sorrow ; the veil drops upon them in that condition. Every indication of a further change is withheld ; so that, if it be designed, it has not been made known, and is nowhere incorporated with the Divine teaching. Whatever else pertains to this sad subject is withheld from our too curious and unprofitable gaze."

Our author refers on p. 218 to the theory of Conditional Immortality as a speculation, with something in its favour but not taught in the Bible and open to objection. An interesting speculation of his own is given on p. 226f. : "Considering that sin is excess, and that the effect of excess is commonly to depress, weaken, and exhaust, it may seem at least as legitimate to contemplate the possibility that there may be in the class of future existences now under view a change, but in the opposite direction : a change which shall enfeeble faculty, affection, even appetite, and more or less drop them out of the human equipment. If it be so, these losses might, under the laws of our nature, include not an increased but a reduced susceptibility ; a reduction of pain, analogous to that which may be brought about by the amputation of some acutely suffering member. It might be that, in the general depression and degradation of human nature brought about by proved incapacity to take profit, here or hereafter, by remedial laws, we might narrow, if not efface, the interval which severs us from animals, in these great particulars

of realising recollection and corresponding anticipation, and might, without having identity, or personality, in any respect impaired, attain an indefinitely large relief from active penalty, at the cost of a descent in the rank of being, which perhaps also may be indefinitely large." The writer adds that the above is mere speculation, given only to show that speculation may take various directions; and urges as a safer course to accept the declarations of Holy Scripture and leave all else in the hands of the Divine and unerring Judge.

Mr. Gladstone disowns, as not justified by anything in the Bible, the common notion that a vast majority of mankind will be lost. The chapters dealing with the subject before us conclude with a "Summary of Theses on a Future Life," in which are recapitulated the results attained.

The whole volume fills me with wonder that a man whose days have been spent in the activities and conflicts of political life was able so carefully to ponder the great realities which will abide when all earthly kingdoms have passed away; and, in extreme old age, on the borderland of the unseen, to give us so valuable an addition to our theological literature.

NOTE O, on p. 245.—In his *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans* (Murray), BISHOP GORE mentions my *Last Things* and Gladstone's *Studies*, and accepts without modification, and reproduces, the teaching therein embodied about both the fate of the lost and the immortality of the soul. On. p. 211 of vol. ii. he says that in his view there has been a legitimate reaction against "the tendency to exaggerate what is revealed to us, and what, therefore, we can say we *know* about the state of man after death. Thus (*a*) there is nothing really revealed to us as to the relative proportions of saved and lost. (*b*) It is certain that we only *know* of a probation for man here and now—'Now is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation.' And the absolutely equitable Father may see the conditions of an adequate probation equally in every man's earthly lot. It is therefore foolish to entertain, or encourage any one else to entertain, an expectation of any other state of probation except that which we certainly have here in this world." On the other hand he admits, "I do not see how we can deny the possibility at any period, or in the

case of any person, of an unfulfilled probation being accomplished beyond death. (c) Careful attention to the origin of the doctrine of the necessary immortality or indestructibility of each human soul, as stated for instance by Augustine or Aquinas, will probably convince us that it was no part of the original Christian message, or of really catholic doctrine. It was rather a speculation of Platonism taking possession of the Church. And this consideration leaves open possibilities of the ultimate extinction of personal consciousness in the lost, which Augustinianism somewhat rudely closed.

"But to have convicted our forefathers of going, in certain parts of their teaching, beyond what was certainly revealed, affords no justification for doing the same ourselves in an opposite extreme ; by asserting for example positively (a) that almost all men will be 'saved' ; or (b) that there is a probation to be looked for beyond death ; or (c) that the souls of 'the lost' will be at the last extinguished. These positive positions are no more justified than those of our forefathers which we have deprecated. We must recognise the limits of positive knowledge."

The writer agrees with me, as does Mr. Gladstone, in repudiating Universalism. He says, on p. 212 f. "When we have come to an end of what a legitimate reaction from the teaching of our forefathers restores to us, in the direction of a 'larger hope,' we are still face to face with the fact of 'eternal judgment.' Men, as far as their individual destinies are concerned, are passing towards one of two ends, not towards one only—a divine judgment of approval *or* of condemnation ; and both judgments are represented as final and irreversible. . . . It seems to me indisputable that 'universalism'—the teaching that there are to be none finally lost—is an instance of wilfulness. To speak of that which lies beyond death, even in the case of the worst and most impenitent criminal, as a place

‘Where God unmakes but to remake the soul,
He else made first in vain—which must not be,’

is, I cannot but feel, in flat contradiction to the whole tone of the New Testament.

"It is no doubt true that there is in the New Testament an expectation of a final unity of the whole universe in God, and that we find it hard to conceive the relation of lost souls in

hell to this final unity. Certainly all legitimate avenues of dim conjecture that a very limited revelation allows to be kept open, ought to be kept open. . . . ‘It is appointed to man once to die, and after that the judgment ;’ and this judgment in the case of those of us who have wilfully hardened themselves, or remained loveless and love-rejecters, in face of the real offer of God to man in Christ Jesus, is a divine condemnation which takes effect in an eternal punishment, the bitterness as well as the justice of which the soul realises, and which—if it does not necessarily mean an everlasting continuance of personal consciousness—is yet final and irreversible, and unspeakably awful.”

So at foot of p. 214. “The only passage in the New Testament which strongly suggests an *everlasting* persistence of personal consciousness of pain, is Rev. xx. 10;” which Bp. Gore goes on to prove not to be decisive.

This complete confirmation of the teaching of this volume, by a theologian so eminent and devout as Bp. Gore, is of utmost value.

NOTE P, on p. 245.—Language pointing in the same direction is found in a volume of essays, marked by keen insight and well-balanced judgment expressed in chaste diction, by DR. W. T. DAVISON, entitled *The Christian Interpretation of Life*, Methodist Publishing House, 1898. Touching “the doctrine of a future life,” he writes, on p. 52f.: “The Universalist can only range the New Testament on his side by ignoring clear statements concerning the fate of the wicked, or by explaining them away. The Annihilationist shapes his whole view of human nature, and the meaning of immortality, and reconstructs the whole interpretation of the words ‘life’ and ‘death,’ in order to be able to prove that somewhere in the far future the wicked will be no more. With the hopes and desires which prompt these persistent endeavours, it is easy to sympathise; but it is impossible to approve the exegesis by which either theory is supported. Granted that in some ages of the Christian Church dogmatism on the subject of the future condition of the finally impenitent has been excessive, and that it is impossible for us to lift the veil which after the Last Judgment hides the lost from our view, it

remains true that Scripture warrants neither the hope that they will ultimately be restored to righteousness, nor the assurance that their existence will sooner or later terminate. Scripture neither reveals to us the origin nor the ultimate issues of evil, and it does not definitely promise that the morning of that fair day shall ever dawn when there shall be no more evil, as there is no more curse.

"An ultimate dualism in the universe is unthinkable. It does not therefore follow that we are at liberty to fashion our own reconciliation between conceivable alternatives. The resolution of the antinomy may well be beyond the scope of our present powers, and he is a rash man who seeks to force Scripture to proclaim his own hopes of the way in which that prospect will be realised." So on p. 55: "An ultimate dualism is not in accordance with Scripture teaching. There is a class of passages in the New Testament which must not be slighted because it is not easy to say precisely *how* they may be reconciled with passages which describe the ultimate fate of the impenitent. What is clear is that they presage an ultimate harmony, a reconciliation or summing up of all things in Christ, whether in heaven, on earth, or under the earth; the bowing of every knee, willing or unwilling, to Him; and the delivery of the accomplished mediatorial kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all."

Throughout the whole essay the writer carefully avoids anything implying the traditional doctrine of the endless suffering of the lost. And I do not know how to interpret his words, "An ultimate dualism is not in accordance with Scripture teaching," except as a direct contradiction of the once prevalent tradition which asserted confidently that this doctrine is taught in the Bible. For endless suffering implies endless permanence of evil, which is essentially antagonistic to good. Consequently, to assert the endless suffering of the lost, as Christian tradition has done during many centuries, is to assert "an ultimate dualism," which as Dr. Davison correctly says, "is *unthinkable*," and "not in accordance with Scripture teaching." His treatment of the subject, though somewhat ambiguous, is a solemn warning not to violate the silence of the Bible about the ultimate doom of the lost. And this, stated in clearer language, is the main point of this volume of mine.

Dr. Davison complains that "the Annihilationist (re)shapes

his whole view of human nature, and the meaning of immortality, and reconstructs the whole interpretation of the words ‘life’ and ‘death.’” But we have already seen, on pp. 162-168, 208-218, that the New Testament, which speaks of “eternal life” as a reward of the righteous and of a “second death” as the punishment of the wicked, and which never asserts or suggests the endless permanence of all human souls, differs widely in phrase and thought from the popular theology which speaks confidently of a “never-dying soul” and of the lost as living for ever in torment. Surely here there is need for reconstruction of our interpretation and phraseology. By attempting it, and thus calling attention to the above difference, “the Annihilationist” has rendered to theology no small service.

NOTE Q, on p. 245. Another, and much clearer, testimony is to be found in a small volume by the REV. GEORGE JACKSON, of the Wesleyan mission in Edinburgh, on *The Old Methodism and the New*: Hodder & Stoughton, 1903. On p. 46ff. he writes, in reference to the problem of Future Retribution: “I am told on the highest authority, that the late Dr. Moulton, who held an unrivalled position in Wesleyan Methodism as a saintly scholar, was wont, in private, to describe his own attitude as one of ‘reverent agnosticism.’ The phrase not inaptly describes the state of mind of multitudes of his younger brethren to-day. On the one hand, they can receive neither Universal Restoration nor Conditional Immortality, for they are resolved to be loyal to the New Testament, and they do not find either of these doctrines there. On the other hand, they dare not speak as did many of their fathers of the doom of the lost, for neither can they find warrant for this in the words either of Christ or His Apostles. Therefore they are agnostics. Yet this does not mean that they doubt the reality of future penalty, or are silent concerning it. Again I say, their aim is to be loyal to Christ; and since He warned men of the consequences of sin, they dare not cease to warn them too. ‘The words of Christ,’ they believe with Dr. Dale, however indefinite they may be with regard to the kind of penalty which is to come upon those who live and die in revolt against God, and however indefinite they may be with regard to the duration of the penalty,

are words which 'shake the heart with fear.' Of this they are sure ; beyond this they know nothing, and can say nothing."

The reader will notice that this clear description agrees to the letter with the teaching of this volume. If Mr. Jackson's statement is correct, "multitudes of his younger brethren to-day" are going without a hair's-breadth deviation along the lines marked out by me in this volume nearly six years before he wrote.

The term "agnostic" is an undesirable description of this position. For all human knowledge is limited : and, beyond our limits, we are all *agnostics*. Consequently, if we use this term, we must define carefully what it is we do *not know*. A term which needs to be carefully defined, and which otherwise will give rise to great misapprehension, is always undesirable.

In close agreement with the views quoted above, Mr. Jackson quotes Dr. Alexander Maclaren as writing : "I do not believe that the New Testament shuts us up to the Eternal Punishment theory. There seem to me to be two streams of representation in it, one of which, if taken in all its width of possible meaning, seems to assert it, e.g. 'These shall go away,' etc., and the parallel passages ; the other, which, taken in all *its* width of possible meaning, seems to assert universal restoration, e.g. the great passage in Eph. i. and its parallels. Whichever theory is taken, one set of Scripture passages must be somewhat strained to cover it. I therefore believe that it is intended to reserve the question of the eternal condition of rebellious wills, hidden beneath a veil of solemn mystery. . . . So, on the whole, I leave the fate of these unbelieving souls in the solemn darkness where, I think, the Bible leaves it, assured that each will go to '*his own place*' for which he is fitted by character, and believing that, without any theory of the duration, there is enough in the fact of future retribution to make the Gospel precious as a means of escape from it, as well as for higher reasons."

On the other hand Mr. Jackson says, on p. 45, that Dr. R. W. Dale held that they who have rejected Christ "are destined to eternal destruction, to a second death from which there is no resurrection ;" in other words, that he accepted the doctrine of the ultimate extinction of the lost.

by DR. W. N. CLARKE, an American divine, entitled *An Outline of Christian Theology*, (T. and T. Clark, 1898), embodies a modern trend of thought worthy of attention.

On p. 192 the writer says that "MAN IS IMMORTAL,—that is to say, the human personality is undying. The spirit is the person, and what is here affirmed is that the human spirit will never cease to be a human being."

This assertion he supports by three arguments. "(1) The continuance of the spirit after death has been almost universally believed in, in all ages, by men of all grades of intelligence." But this does not necessarily imply its endless permanence. Another argument is "(2) The conviction that another life follows this, finds various support in human thought and experience." This also we may admit. "(3) Christ greatly enriched and confirmed the hope of immortality, and made it practically a part of Christianity." In proof of this Phil. i. 19-25 ; 2 Cor. v. 1-9 ; 1 Pet. i. 3-5, v. 10 ; 2 Tim. i. 10 are quoted. The writer then adds : "Concerning the general immortality, the influence of Jesus certainly has supported in Christians the conviction that all men live for ever ; for among Christians this belief has been held, with only occasional variations, not merely as a natural conviction but as a Christian certainty. Christ does not affirm in so many words that all men live for ever, but he powerfully teaches it by his attitude and mode of appeal to men." But, of all this, our writer gives no proof or indication of proof, or presumption.

Dr. Clarke's conception of the Second Coming of Christ is, on p. 458, summed up as follows : "If the coming of Christ is conceived as spiritual, not visible, and as a process, not an event, a change in one's idea of the resurrection will necessarily follow. If no visible descent of Christ is looked for, no simultaneous resurrection of humanity on the earth will be expected. If we accept the view of Christ's coming that has been expressed on previous pages, we shall naturally think that each human being's resurrection takes place at his death, and consists in the rising of the man from death to life in another realm of life. . . . According to this view resurrection is not simultaneous for all, but continuous or successive ; and for no human being is there any intervening period of disembodiment."

This teaching sweeps away the resurrection of the dead,

so clearly taught in 1 Cor. xv. 35-53, Phil. iii. 21; and the simultaneous judgment taught in Matt. xxv. 31-46, John v. 28, 29, Acts xvii. 31, Rom. ii. 5-10, Rev. xx. 11-15. So also on p. 463 : "As to the time of the coming judgment: It is certain that one judgment, as now defined, must occur for every human being in the passage from this life to another. . . . The act may be public or private, vocal or silent, explicit or implied, but judgment is passed and executed in the very act of conveying a man to his proper lot and place in another world."

The difficulty involved in a conscious intermediate state I have, on p. 17, already admitted. But this great difficulty seems to me an altogether insufficient reason for setting aside the plain teaching of the various New Testament writers quoted above, and much else similar. We must not give up plain and abundant biblical teaching because we cannot bring it into harmony with our own inferences.

On p. 445 Dr. Clarke suitably warns his readers against the danger of underestimating, in view of an early return of Christ, the spiritual forces now at work in the world.

On pp. 450-453 he mentions and rejects the doctrines of annihilation and conditional immortality. He says: "These doctrines will probably prove unsatisfactory and untenable. The best human thought, springing from the best experience, recognises more and more the intrinsic value of man, and tends constantly to the assertion of immortality as a universal human endowment. In spite of questions that must arise, belief in the permanent continuance of all human beings is the belief that seems certain to hold the ground." But, for this anticipation, he gives no reason.

Our author not unfairly, on p. 468, calls attention to the fact that they who die in infancy have no probation on earth: and from this he infers that they will have a probation beyond the grave. On this and other grounds, he protests against the current belief that the destinies of all men are irrevocably fixed at death. He also expresses a hope that some such probation may lead to the ultimate salvation of all men. So on p. 477: "From such considerations comes the hope of many that God will finally bring all souls from sin to holiness." This hope he strengthens by adding, on p. 478, that "Christian thought is moving in the direction of the belief that even there (in the other

world) punishment has in the mind of God a reformatory purpose." But he does not discuss the passages, e.g. Phil. iii. 19, Matt. iii. 12, which assert or imply the final ruin of the lost.

In spite of many excellences, Dr. Clarke's book seems to me seriously defective. Whatever comes before him, he discusses intelligently and helpfully, and no one can rise from a study of his book without great profit. But several important elements of New Testament teaching are very inadequately treated, or are passed over in silence. For instance, the all-important doctrine of the Church occupies only five pages; Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not mentioned. Moreover, as in the case of the Second Coming of Christ and the Day of Judgment, Dr. Clarke does little or nothing to harmonise his own teaching with teaching in the New Testament which seems to contradict it. He does nothing to prove that all human souls will exist for ever: yet he seems to assume it. He can see no way by which evil can be banished from the world except by the final restoration of all men. The passages which plainly contradict this universal restoration he passes by in absolute silence. In short, he forsakes the only safe method of Doctrinal Theology, viz. careful reproduction and comparison of the teaching of the various writers of the Bible.

His book, however, is a good illustration of the tendency of the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul to lead to Universalism.

NOTE S, on p. 144.—From the pen of REV. H. A. A. KENNEDY, D.Sc., we have a scholarly and interesting work on *St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1904). In the main, his exposition agrees with that given above in Lects. xi. and xii. So p. 95: "Many of these speculations never appealed to St. Paul. Subjects like Conditional Immortality or Eternal Punishment certainly did not present themselves to his mind in the guise or in the terms which form the battle ground of modern discussions. . . . We emphasise the 'point of view' and the 'precise significance of his language,' because St. Paul is often cited in modern books as an authority for views which he would not have understood, as a witness to theories foreign to his entire method of thought." But I cannot accept the statement on p. 113: "for him (Paul) death is one indivisible experience.

It is the correlative of sin. Like all the Biblical writers, he never distinguishes between ‘moral’ (or ‘spiritual’) and ‘physical.’” But both Paul and John used the words *dead* and *death* sometimes for the death of the body, so familiar to us all, and at other times to describe the spiritual condition of some who were still alive in body: e.g. 1 Cor. xv. 12, 13, 15, 16, 35, 42, 52, cp. *vv.* 3, 22, ch. ix. 15, compared with Eph. ii. 1, 5, Col. ii. 13; and John v. 24 compared with ch. xi. 4, 13, 21, 37, 44. We have here two distinct meanings of the word. On p. 121f. Dr. Kennedy confirms my use of the word *ruin* on pp. 124f., 128, to reproduce the sense of *ἀπώλεια* and its cognates.

On pp. 307-319, he discusses Paul’s teaching about the fate of the lost. In agreement with this volume (p. 241) we read on p. 308, “As to a period of probation after death, in which these redemptive opportunities, neglected during earthly existence, might again be offered and seized, he says not a single word. In fact, as we have noted, the idea of an Intermediate State is one which seems never to have appealed to him, and it is ignored as of secondary importance.” On p. 309 he says, “Plainly, the main outlines of his doctrinal teaching leave no place for, and suggest no approximation to, a theory of universal salvation.” He then discusses, in harmony with pp. 145ff. of this volume, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

On p. 315 our author writes, “For him (Paul), as for Hebrews and Greeks alike, there would probably always remain in the background the notion of a dreary, wretched existence, removed by the whole infinitude of God from that which he designated ‘Life.’” But, of this probability, he neither gives nor suggests proof.

Dr. Kennedy is careful to avoid giving any indication whether the Bible contains adequate proof that Christ or His apostles taught, as the tradition of the Church has taught confidently during many centuries, the endless suffering of the lost, this involving endless permanence of evil. This supreme practical question, involving issues so serious, like many other writers, he altogether ignores.

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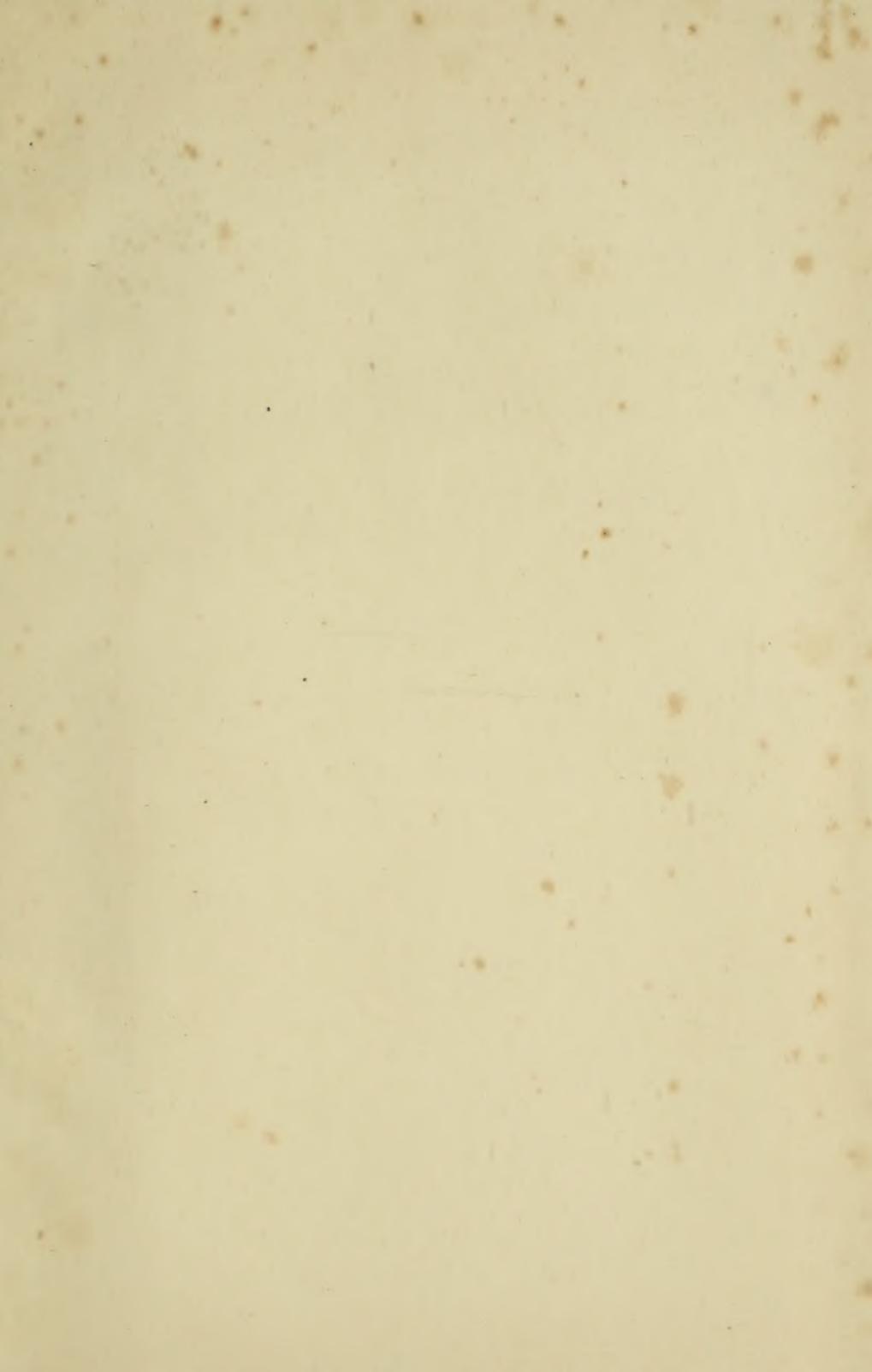
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